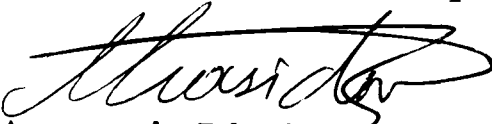


A sociological and historical analysis of special education policymaking; The case of Cyprus

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of
Ph.D**

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own


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Date: 4/08/06

The thesis including abstract but not including contents and bibliography
is 79930 words

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to interrogate and challenge the individual pathology imperatives that have traditionally held sway over special education, thereby providing an alternative, and hence liberating, theorization of special education policymaking, conceptualised in terms of the incessant interplay of unequal power relations. The “crises” and “settlements” characterizing the policymaking process are thus perceived as being invariably enmeshed with the power/knowledge nexus, which set the “discursive contours” within which special education policy constitution and dissemination are taking place.

The study draws on an eclectic confluence of philosophical and theoretical predilections that have the potential to critically interrogate key issues of special education policymaking within the Cyprus context. Documentary analysis and interviews are used as a means to expose the pervasiveness of the power/knowledge couplet enshrined in the interplay between agency and structure, for the production of the dominant discourses, through which educational policymaking is contextualised and contested.

Critical examination is given to particular aspects of key legislative documents, White Papers, and correspondence from a range of stakeholders, including members of organizations as well as individuals, coupled with an exploration of the perceptions and ideologies of key policymakers in relation to the ways in which their “discursive realities” are influenced, maintained and contested by an array of social, political and institutional dynamics.

Given the multidimensional and complex nature of the issues under investigation the study attests to the necessity to constantly and diligently interrogate the interlocking framework of ideological and structural dynamics in the pursuit of “emancipatory ruptures” which are an indispensable component of the endeavours for change.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Len Barton for his incalculable help for the accomplishment of this PhD thesis. Most importantly, however, I would like to thank him for enabling me to think critically.

Also, I would like to thank my parents and my sister for always being there for me.

Finally, special thanks to the people in Cyprus, who consented to participate and contribute to the research.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

Chapters' overview

Chapter 1 constitutes the counter voice to the scientific exegeses upon which special education policy has been traditionally predicated. Adopting a pluralistic theoretical framework the attempt is to question the cherished orthodoxies informing the policymaking process and to offer a more liberating meta-theory of special education.

Chapter 2 attempts to explicate educational policymaking as a discursive struggle whose core element is the notion of ideology. The notion of ideology permeates both structures and actors and plays a crucial role in the incessant agonism over policy constitution and dissemination.

Chapter 3 examines the material existence of ideologies and their reification through the notion of discourse as this is evinced within the institutional infrastructure of a particular socio-political system. The configurations of ideologies, through the institutional “regimes of truth”, bear an important impact on the policymaking process.

Chapter 4 is an attempt to expose the historical, social, political and institutional dynamics inscribed in the Cyprus context. The “fine meshes of power” informing the policymaking process are traced and analysed within an interactive network consisting of a panoply of micro and macro discursive dynamics, that constitute an essentially idiomorphic special education policymaking landscape.

Chapter 5 depicts the methodological setting through which the aims of the research will be realised. The methods of investigation, it is argued, have the potential to divulge “today’s discourse” in special education policymaking, along with the variegated dynamics that permeate the constitution of such a discourse. Central to special education policymaking are the “regimes of truth” that the most powerful social actors uphold along with the discursive practices that produce and sustain them.

Chapter 6 is an attempt to converge conventional and post-modernized methods for the data analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis is drawn on to delve into the linguistic micro-technologies of power that are entrenched within the texts and within the

narrative stories of key policy actors, thereby exposing the discursive linkages and interactions inherent in them.

Chapter 7 aims to examine the compilation of official documents and to analyse them against the wider spatial and chronological context. The aim is to offer an alternative approach to conventional modes of analysis and identify the fine meshes of power that colluded in their production.

Chapter 8 concentrates on the narratives of key policy actors and attempts to identify and interrogate the power/knowledge web that has colluded towards the discursive constitution of Cyprus special education policy landscape. The analysis of key policymakers' interviews vindicates that the knowledge basis of special education is constituted within an interactive web consisting of an amalgam of synchronic and diachronic ideological and structural dynamics.

Chapter 9 offers some insights into the intentions of research. Points of limitation are acknowledged and the perennial importance of a critical emancipatory approach is advocated.

PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE	i
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
CONTENTS	v
CHAPTERS' OVERVIEW	xi

CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction	1
1.1 Theorizing special education; A prelude	2
1.2 Special education policy and post-modernism; A multi-paradigm shift	6
1.3 Educational Policy Analysis	10
1.4 Cyprus special education policy analysis	16
1.5 Inclusive education, the struggles for change and educational policy analysis	19
1.6 Conclusion	23

CHAPTER TWO:

Educational policymaking pluralism

Introduction	24
2.1 Educational Policymaking as a political struggle	25
2.2 Ideology; the interplay of ideas	29
2.3 Ideology, power relations and educational policymaking	34
2.4 Ideology and the interplay of action and structure; an all- encompassing agenda	37
2.4.1 The welfare state and the marketization of education	41
2.4.2 The ideology of control	42
2.4.3 The redemptive ideologies; The sociological response to disability	43
2.5 Conclusion	44

CHAPTER THREE:

Inclusive Policies and Institutional Conditions

Introduction	46
3.1 Education Policy, institutional conditions and the emergence and dissemination of power	47
3.1.1 Constitutional and legislative conditions	48
3.1.2 Administrative-political and bureaucratic conditions	50

3.1.3 Economic conditions	52
3.2 Deconstructing legislation-deconstructing asymmetrical power relations	54
3.3 Conclusion	57
 CHAPTER FOUR:	
The Cyprus context:	
Introduction	61
4.1 Asymmetrical power relations within the Cyprus policy context	62
4.2 Peculiarities of the Cyprus context; some historical considerations	63
4.2.1 Colonialism and ethnocentricity	63
4.2.2 The late years of colonialism; The emergence of utilitarianism	70
4.3 The dialectic of the global and the local; The case of Cyprus	74
4.4 Disabled children and asymmetrical power relations within legislation	76
4.5 Inclusive education policy; A disassembling critique	79
4.6 The new legislation; the illusion of progress	85
4.7 Asymmetrical power relations within the Cyprus society	90
4.8 The feasibility of educational change. The case of Cyprus	93
4.9 The Cyprus education system and inclusive education; The resurgence of segregating education in disguise?	95
4.10 The paradox of Educational restructuring; The ascendancy of professionals	97
4.11 Conclusion	99
 CHAPTER FIVE	
Methodology	
Introduction	101
5.1 The empirical setting	103
5.2 Details of sample populations	104
5.3 Research ethics	104
5.4 Respondents selected from the upper and lower echelon of the government	106
5.5 Theoretical sample	108
5.6 Data collection procedures	109
5.6.1 Procedures for obtaining documentary sample	109
5.6.2 Procedures for obtaining interview sample	110
5.7 Research instruments	111
5.7.1 Documentary analysis	111
5.7.2 Interviews	112
5.8 Interview schedule	114
5.9 Collecting the data; some reflections	114
5.10 Conclusion	115

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis re-defined

Introduction	117
6.1 Analysis of the data; A pluralistic (post-modern) approach	117
6.2 Critical Discourse Analysis-CDA	123
6.3 Principles and Theoretical underpinnings of CDA	125
6.4 Criticisms of CDA-Issues of reliability and validity	127
6.5 Putting CDA into practice; some critical considerations	129
6.6 Conclusion	132

CHAPTER SEVEN

Critical discourse analysis and special education documents

Introduction	135
7.1 The interplay of domination	136
7.2 Documentary analysis and the evolution of special education	137
7.3 The new legislation and the struggles that preceded it	141
7.4 The linguistic surgery towards a more inclusive lexicon; The case of the three White Papers	147
7.5 Policy as discourse; the power to exclude	154
7.6 Parents and special education documents- the interplay of power	159
7.7 Special education; Rhetoric versus Reality	169
7.8 Conclusion	175

CHAPTER EIGHT

Key policy actors and their will to truth

Introduction	177
8.1 The origins of integration	178
8.2 Ideological and social factors	182
8.3 Political factors	186
8.4 Economic considerations	192
8.5 The creation of the current legislative framework	199
8.6 The impact of EU	203
8.7 Inclusion-Segregation in disguise	206
8.8 The pervasiveness of Language; The power to exclude	215
8.9 Special education thinking; The exclusionary inclusion	218
8.10 The position and function of resource units	221
8.11 Conclusion	227

CHAPTER NINE	
EPILOGUE	230
APPENDIX	234
BIBLIOGRAPHY	240

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The traditional interlinking of special education with the scientific and functional regimes of truth, consolidated and perpetuated an erroneous form of thinking that distorted the political and contested nature of the field. The overarching influence of such thinking is still prevalent and continues to permeate, albeit more subtly, the discursive constitution of the dominant thinking, despite the attacks that its pseudoscientific axioms have so far received.

The impact of this form of thinking in special education produced a certain kind of knowledge that it is argued, acted to the detriment of disabled children and their advocates. The individualistic gaze concentrated on children's deficits and obscured external parameters. Simultaneously the normalizing judgement construed disabled children as abnormal and deviant who should be disciplined and brought to line, through an array of "rationalised" technologies of power imposed on them. There was little room for other considerations or alternative regimes of truth.

What follows is an attempt to theorize special education policymaking in terms of the incessant interplay of unequal power relations. In order to achieve this, it is important to draw on interrelated theoretical standpoints. Special educational policymaking cannot be adequately theorised unless examined and analysed against a backdrop of different theoretical conceptualisations and constructs. Central to the theorization pursued, is the concomitant theorization of the interconnectedness between agency and structure and its overarching impact on educational policymaking.

The theoretical framework upon which this research is predicated constitutes a convergence of different intertwined elements that are recurrently evinced and interconnected through a reciprocally interrelated network. By implication the same notions are presented, analysed and evaluated against different theoretical contexts.

1.1 Theorizing special education; A prelude

Special Education has been traditionally predicated on the assumption that there is a body of unassailable and hence, rational knowledge that is ahistorical, apolitical and therefore, value free. Given this, academics within the field have been hitherto assailed by the thrust to discover and establish, through empirical study, this objective knowledge, and as a corollary to this, eschewed the possibility to “meddle with the sentimental, the subjective, the sloppy and the politicised” (Thomas and Glenny 2002;345) that presumably distorted the scientific regimes of truth.

Objectivism, however, in social sciences is currently challenged by the so-called anti-foundational or in other words, the non-deterministic view of social knowledge, which disavows monolithic and mono-dimensional considerations of a single theoretical frame of reference for interpreting the social world. Giddens provides a succinct account on the indubitable differentiation that exists between “nature” and “social world”. As he writes:

The difference between society and nature is that nature is... not produced by man. While not made by any single person, society is created and recreated afresh, if not *ex nihilo* (sic), by the participant in every social encounter. The *production* of society is a skilled performance, sustained and “made to happen” by human beings (Giddens 1979 cited in Cohen 1989;22).

In this respect, knowledge about reality is rather subjective than objective, and emerges from a particular and historically situated frame of reference. It is, therefore, acknowledged, that neutrality is a utopian concept, as things and meanings, facts and values cannot be disentangled and viewed as distinct entities. Theory is informed by our values, experiences, culture, intention and choices (Gallagher 2001), and it is inevitably subjected to the complexity that is inscribed in human systems, which by no means can be described as closed or as being subjected to general laws (Rubinstein 1986).

In effect, theory should emanate from a political stance, and should encompass a holistic investigation of meaning, significance and the social and historical contexts (Thomas and Loxley 2001) within which theories emerge and get reified. Context thus acquires a pre-eminent position and constitutes a sine qua requirement in any

critical endeavour. Having said this, theories should be regarded as precarious and contingent conceptual constructs that are discursively constituted within an interlocking and reciprocal framework of historical, social and political dynamics. As Gutting (1994;17) puts it, whilst explicating Foucault's interminable critical inquiry towards his own theoretical and philosophical predilections:

...the theories devised are not intended as permanent structures, enduring in virtue of their universal truth. They are temporary scaffoldings, erected for a specific purpose, that Foucault is happy to abandon to whomever might find them useful once he has finished his job.

Whilst acknowledging the precarious nature of theories devised, it is crucial to eclectically deploy "specific inquiries into a multitude of specific structures and interactions..."(Dewey in Meiklejohn 1996;83 cited in Thomas and Loxley 2001;15), that will lead to the reconsideration of the so called "scientific" exegeses upon which the sacred certitudes of special education thinking and practice have been predicated so far, and which emanated from a specific "frame of reference". Understandably, the choice of a particular theoretical frame of reference is contingent upon the "historic languages of feelings, sentiments, imaginings, fancies, desires..."(Oakeshott 1989;65 cited in Thomas and Loxley 2001;28) that are deep rooted in our basic beliefs, values, assumptions and considerations (Lindsay and Thompson 1997). From this perspective, it is of crucial importance to

survey the current thinking of theorizing and to identify the broad trends which characterize current thinking. These trends tell us something about ourselves: they tell us about the assumptions which we are coming to share, the values which are implicit or explicit in our work and the priorities which we are embodying in our theories (Clark et al 1998; 156).

Theorizing about special education should be thus primarily based on moral terms (Gallagher 2001), as it is mutually defined by people and it also constitutes a subjective and contingent endeavour. Special Education theory, in this respect, is subject to a plethora of alternative "possible knowledges or optional descriptions" (Skrtic 1995; 45), with profound implications for social justice (Skrtic 1991,1995), an issue that is central to the re-conceptualisation of special education and the quest of an inclusive discourse.

In the same vein, it is argued that theorizing about special education should primarily focus on a post-modern approach (Corbett 1993; Skrtic 1995), whereby theories

reflect the values and assumptions of a particular and time specific socio-political context. Knowledge is redefined and re-conceptualised and post-modernism “commits itself to ambiguity, relativity, fragmentation, particularity and discontinuity” (Crotty 1998;185). From this perspective, it is alleged that there is nothing inherently true in special education and that special education is constituted by a plethora of “paradigms” that emerge from the “frame of reference” of the most powerful social actors. Knowledge becomes then, indispensable from power as they co-exist and are constantly implicated in a dynamic and reciprocal relation. Given this, knowledge ceases to be considered as a simple representation of reality and as a corollary to this, the various forms of scientism are readily disavowed (Peter and Humes 2003).

Foucault (1984) was particularly concerned with the elusive nature of truth and knowledge and sought to interrogate through geneology, the “genes” or the provenance of certain “regimes of truth”, as these were evinced within context and time specific institutions. The interrogation of the prevalent regimes of truth revealed the subtle, yet corrosive processes, of power that produced the dominant discourses of the time through the “will to truth”. As he writes, whilst attempting to disentangle the “order of discourse”:

Thus all that appears to our eyes is a truth conceived as a richness, fecundity, a gentle and insidiously universal force, and in contrast, we are unaware of the will to truth, that prodigious machinery designed to exclude (Foucault 1984;114).

For Foucault, the search for truth was not thus the result of a scientific enquiry per se, but it was the result of an unveiling process aimed at divulging the pervasive micro-technologies of power that constituted certain subjectivities. It was more or less a new-conceptualised historical inquiry whereby the gaze concentrated on the dynamic micro textures of discourse that constitute the prevalent “regimes of truth”. Foucault attempts to provide a “historicized ontology” (Peters 1999,2003) and concomitantly disqualifies ontology as a sufficient theoretical construct for interpreting the social world.

Moving beyond the functional and hence, mono-dimensional and pseudo-epistemological perspectives by which the field has been so significantly influenced, the aim is to engage in emancipatory “scepticism” and construe “liberating

alternatives” (Gutting 1994;3) so as to re-conceptualise and offer fresh perspectives around the notion of special education. This in turn will open up new possibilities that have the potential to facilitate education change and construct inclusion (Thomas and Loxley 2001).

The above considerations, however, do not disavow the problematic and contentious nature of such a process, as the quest of an absolute truth is ultimately misleading and illusory (Clark et al 1998). Theories emanating from a post-modern perspective cannot even be easily articulated given the perplexity and idiosyncrasy of human relations. Hence, theorizing about special education should be regarded as being an ever-changing and unending process, which by no means should be considered prescriptive or permanent, and it should not distract attention from other crucial considerations and concerns for change, which should primarily characterise special education (Thomas and Loxley 1998). What we should ultimately, bear in mind is the necessity to humanise Special Education, thus acknowledging its contingent and provisional nature. As Thomas and Glenny (2002;360) write:

An argument is made, if we are looking to the shape of an education system for the future, for more reliance by all in education-practitioners, planners, academic researchers- on our own understanding of learning, and on ideas and ideals about equity, social justice and opportunity for all. In pursuing these ideals, in improving the education system, we should accept rather than deny the insights, which emerge by virtue of being human.....for as we noted earlier, there are no magic fixes or startling insights to emerge from the traditional knowledge-base of special education

In a similar way, Ballard (2004) calls for a new approach to research in special education that is concerned with the notion of being human, of “humanness”. This kind of research includes reiterating Ballard (2004;104), “ an ongoing interrogation of the assumptions, models, theories, paradigms, and ideologies we use, and how they shape what we claim to know”.

Given the above considerations, special education policy should be seen from a broader perspective beyond the confinements of functional thought that advocates what Slee (2001c;117) has once described as “a deep epistemological attachment to the view that special education needs are produced by the impaired pathology of the child”. Given the emergence of the new regimes of truth, special education should be

considered as a precarious historical and socio-political artefact constituted by an array of ideological and structural dynamics implicated in the incessant interplay of unequal power relations.

1.2 Special education policy and post-modernism; A multi-paradigm shift

Post-modernism is defined in multiple of ways. The fluidity of the term is well recognised (Crotty 1998; Baert 1998; Turner 1990), and reflects the essence of post-modernism, which lies beyond any binarisms, as well as any conceptual and philosophical confinements and embraces a multitude of paradigmatic voices (Skrtic 1991,1995) thereby displaying, as Smart (1990;23) playfully writes, “a penchant for pastiche”. Selective strands of postmodernism can thus be used and combined beyond any lines of demarcation, according to the focal point of social analysis.

In some cases post-modernism is perceived as synonymous to post-structuralism in spite of their differing theoretical antecedents (Peters 1999). Their philosophical merging is not reprehensible as some of their theoretical predilections either overlap or complement each other. Overcoming any forms of binary thinking, selective strands of the two (post)-movements can, borrowing Foucault’s proposition (cited in Tyler 1997;77), be taken as “openings...where those who may be interested are invited to join in” for a cross-disciplinary and pluralistic inquiry.

Postmodernism, is predicated on the assumption that “truth” emerges from a dialogical process among a variety of perspectives and therefore, special education can be theorised by using a plethora of paradigmatic voices. Reiterating Gellner (1992;24)

Postmodernism would seem to be rather clearly in favour of relativism, in as far as it is capable of clarity, and hostile to the idea of unique, exclusive, objective, external or transcendent truth. Truth is elusive, polymorphous, inward, subjective...(Cited in Hartley 1994;232).

In much the same way, post-structuralism according to Peters (1999;62)

...challenges scientism in the human sciences, introduces an anti-foundationalism in epistemology and a new emphasis upon perspectivism in interpretation. The movement

challenges the rationalism and realism that structuralism continues from positivism, with its promethium faith in scientific method.....

As earlier discussed, Foucault and his geneology, reject the essentialist position and give prominence to the relative nature of the objects and practices, which are dependent upon the context within which they arise (Baert 1998; Popkewitz and Brennan 1998). Foucault's (1984a;77) geneology constitutes a form of a novel historical inquiry that eschews the need to locate for "ideal signification and indefinite teleologies" (cited in Howarth 2002;128). Similarly, Derrida, applies the dialogical process to meaning in the sense that meaning is not within the words we use and therefore, there is not a single meaning or interpretation within a theory or a philosophical system (Benton and Craib 2001).

In this respect, special education policy and practice can be conceived of as having been based on erroneous grounds as the inadequacies of the education system have been merely attributed to individual pathology and school organization (Skrtic 1991), without giving concomitant consideration to the social processes and the power struggles, which are implicated in that process and which ultimately, constitute the essence of special education (Tomlinson 1982).

Special education policy and practice, therefore, should be regarded as the result of a plethora of paradigmatic voices vying for dominance within the wider socio-political context. Power is "dispersed, not centralised in society" (Baert 1998;124), and thereby new meanings and new theorizations emerge from power struggles, which are disseminated and reside within all arenas of a political and educational system and which ultimately, construct "knowledge". In this respect:

One of the pivotal features of power is that it identifies individuals who, instead of being the "points of application" of power, become the "vehicle" through which it is circulated (Baert 1998;125).

From this perspective, the human agent is recognised as being the primary force behind these power struggles, and central to geneology, is the significance of the belief and ethical systems which are implicated within this process (Baert 1998) and which determine the generation of new meanings. Whilst studying history, a geneologist:

...finds that there is 'something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms (Foucault 1997a;142 cited in Olssen 2003;194).

Geneology, thus, opens up new possibilities to conceptualise and explicate the discourses of power and practice that influence and ultimately, constitute the essence of special education policymaking.

In alignment with the above considerations, a post-modern approach eschews any forms of binarism (Peters 1999) and as a result, it extends its scope of analysis to an all-encompassing agenda. Postmodernism thus embraces the utilization of other accounts for interpreting the social world, that enable the researcher to move beyond the "tidy generalities" of policy studies, and acknowledge and pursue its "messy realities" (Ball 1990;9).

In this respect, many sociological accounts are based on structural perspectives, which lend support to the fact that conflict is endemic in special education. Structural and conflict theories are used extensively in studying social institutions and processes, whereby special education is not an exception, and are primarily represented by the works of Marx and Weber (Tomlinson 1982). An example of the conflict that is inherent in special education is evinced in the contradictory policies that exist and pose discursive confinements and confound education policy. On the one hand policies are concerned with social inclusion and social justice and on the other hand the marketization of education is increasingly becoming a dominant policy imperative. Weddel (2005;2) talks about the inconsequent and contradictory character of national policies, whereby "national education policies often act to frustrate each other in their implementation", and defines this as an example of system problems.

Thus, in spite of the fact that social actors are regarded as being the prime agents of change, many institutional conditions and authoritative discourses, endemic within a socio-political and educational system, constitute impediments to change, as they constantly pose dilemmas and contradictory considerations within all arenas of the educational apparatus (Fulcher 1989). This is not irrelevant to Foucault's theorizations on the ways that human beings are discursively constituted under the

imposition of time and context specific regimes of truth. In this respect it is apposite to reiterate Cray and Denicolo's (1998;143) contention that: "...disablism is institutionalised, that is, it exists independently of the attitudes and values of individuals or groups. It can therefore be solved, not at the level of changing attitudes, but by wider, structural and political changes".

The above considerations insinuate the decentralisation of the social actor (Cohen 1989; Peters 1999), and her unavoidable subjection to the infrastructural bases of social life. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the most powerful social actors, give prominence to their own conceptualisation of reality and create their own interpretations and meanings according to their values, belief systems and vested interests, they are also inevitably subject to the socio-political and institutional structures, which underlie all social relations and social processes. Foucault (1982) vehemently disavowed the idea of the autonomous subject and concentrated on the ways that individuals were constructed and normalized under the contextual regimes of truth imposed on them. As he writes " My objective... has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture human beings are made subjects" (Foucault 1982;208 cited in Kendal and Wickham 1999;51).

Given the perplexity of the issues at hand, the debate about special education should be placed in a much wider context and encompass a thorough critique of those parameters which undermine the attempts for change. In order to look beyond the practices of special education we should consider the multiple "realities" that constitute the complexity of special education, and provide a multi-dimensional and interactive framework of social analysis. The synthesis of the relevant paradigmatic voices has the potential to deconstruct special education and divulge the relativity and fluidity of the term. Central to the synthesis of approaches is the recognition that the revelation and thorough investigation of the dominant "frame of reference" within which the various discourses that inform special education policy are formed and realised, has significant political and moral implications both for individuals and society (Skrtic1995; Barton 1993).

If we are to proceed to educational change and construct inclusion, we need to illuminate the ways that power manifests itself, thus exposing as Peters and Humes

(2003;112) suggest, the “ structures of domination by diagnosing ‘power/knowledge’ relations and their manifestations in the classifications, typologies and institutions”. Put differently, we should reveal and critique the dominant discourses that both implicitly and explicitly steer and eventually shape special education policy. Of crucial importance, therefore, is to acknowledge the necessity to question the representations and subject positions of disabled people as these are constructed and disseminated by powerful social actors through special education policy. Reiterating Foucault (1980;117) once more: “ One has to dispense with the constituted subject, to get rid of the subject itself...to arrive at an analysis which can account for the constitution of subject within a historical framework...” (cited in Popkewitz and Brennan 1998;11).

Central to this endeavour is to disentangle and interrogate the convoluted relationships between ideologies, discourses and unequal power relations immanent in the policymaking process. The question then, is to establish and explicate the sought “frame of reference”, upon which special education policy analysis will be predicated. Just like Foucault’s problematizations and histories that never stop (Kendal and Wickham 1999;4), the subtleties of the sought frame of reference for education policy analysis should be constantly interrogated and reformed as it might be already outmoded by the time it is conceived and explicated. As Lingard et al (1993;vii) so pertinently put it: “ For the policy sociologist, with respect to the fine detail of policy, it is almost the case that what one writes today is out of date tomorrow.”

1.3 Educational Policy Analysis

Much debate has taken place regarding the viability of certain accounts for educational policy analysis (e.g. Ozga 1987, 1990; Ball 1990). These accounts ranged from Marxist to pluralistic accounts, whereby most of them were basically prone to futile binarisms, despite the complexity of issues at hand. Such forms of binarism act, as Hargreaves (1983) contends, as a hindrance for the development of education policy terrain as it “ serves only to inhibit the tradition from appreciating and building upon their very real complementary strengths in the service of improved

understanding of the education policy process, its determinants and effects” (cited in Ozga 1987; 140).

Consequently, the various strands of these hitherto divergent dimensions of a futile binarism need to be explicated and brought into a convergent framework for the analysis of education policy (Ranson 1995). Ozga (1990; 359) asserts that it is crucial to “bring together structural, macro level analyses of education systems and education policies and micro level investigation, especially that which takes account of people’s perceptions and experiences”. This convergent conceptual framework has the potential to delineate the multiple and reciprocal relations between values and materials, which beget policy “contextualization” and “recontextualization” (Ball 1994b). Ultimately, then, the aim will be to offer a multilevel historical and sociological account of the conceptualisation of educational policy along with some interpretations of the various parameters that shape education policy and have impact on the translation of policy into practice.

However, this presupposes an awareness of the fact that this is a subjective endeavour and contingent on interpretation (Taylor 1997). Policy is its self a contested term, there is no fixed or a single definition of it and as Ozga (2000:2) writes, how the term is “understood depends on a considerable degree on the perspective of the researcher” and the way she conceives and examines the ever-changing influences and ideologies that lie behind policies. In much the same way, Danzinger (1995) whilst providing a succinct account of a postmodernized policy analysis approach, discusses the political nature of policy analysis and the inevitable immersion of the analyst in the political process. In effect, there is always a major dilemma regarding the selection and analysis of events, policies and practices. This is especially true in national case studies that refer to an international readership, which knows nothing about the historical, cultural and political discourses of that country (Vlachou-Balafouti and Sideris 2000). Despite these scepticisms, however, the adoption of a certain mode of analysis will not constitute an arbitrary conceptual construct. Rather, it will be predicated on a comprehensive historical account that will provide the backdrop against which the chosen mode of analysis will be placed and explicated.

It needs noting, however, that even though binarism is disavowed as an integrated form of policy analysis, it is necessary at the initial stages of this analysis that a certain kind of binary perspective is adopted, so as to indicate the subtle processes that take place in distinct arenas or “contexts” within which education policy is contested, generated and regenerated. As Ball (1992,1994) contends, it is necessary to distinguish between different “contexts” in policy analysis. Therefore, the focus will be placed upon the different micro-level and macro-level elements along with the conflicts and struggles inherent in them, which are implicated within the “context of influence”, the “ context of policy text production” and the “ context of practice” (Bowe et al 1992;18; Berkhout and Wielemans 1999; 403).

In order to achieve an integrated approach to educational policymaking analysis, it is important to examine the different contexts in policy analysis and to establish and explicate possible interconnections or inconsistencies, not only within the contexts but also between these contexts. Binarism, in this sense, acts merely as an analytical tool, which investigates the parts of the whole before proceeding to the “bigger picture” of education policy, within which any lines of demarcation and hence, any kinds of binarism are annihilated. Put differently, the researcher will attempt to supersede “analysis” and proceed to the “synthesis” of the parts, thus seeking to establish “contextual relations” (Grace 1991), through a “toolbox of diverse concepts and theories”(Ball 1993,1994). It will be thus possible to achieve what Grace (1991;3) calls “policy scholarship” as opposed to “policy science” that “is seductive in its concreteness, is apparent value free and objective stance and its relation to action” .

Bowe et al (1992) refer to the three contexts of policy and adumbrate the contradictory considerations and complexities they might entail. The different contexts as earlier mentioned, are referred to as the “context of influence”, the “context of policy text production” and the “context of practice.” The context of influence is where the intended policy is constituted in the sense that it is within this context that policy discourses are inaugurated. As Bowe et al (1992; 20) write “ Here key policy concepts are established (e.g. market forces, National Curriculum, opting out, budgetary devolution), they acquire currency and credence and provide a discourse and lexicon for policy initiation”. The powerful interested groups within the governmental terrain attempt to “articulate” and “impose” their own policy discourses

which are also influenced by what is happening in the other sectors of the government or internationally.

Whilst one might expect that the context of text production is the direct result of the context of influence, this is not the case. The two contexts have as Bowe et al (1992; 20) contend a “symbiotic but an uneasy relationship”. Ideological beliefs are not being magically “converted” into formal policy as they entail contradictions and inconsistencies, which beget contestations over contestations and so forth. As Levin (1998; 134) contends “ Most peoples’ and all political systems’ belief systems embody a range of ideas, all firmly held, but only some of which will be acted upon depending on circumstances”.

Thus, whatever the context of influence might be, the context of text production is usually geared towards the public good, which the State should provide, whilst it concomitantly disavows the “dogmatic ideologies and narrow interests” embedded in the initial context (Bowe et al 1992; 20). This is, however an arduous and in some respects an elusive endeavour, as the existence of equal or more powerful policies that uphold diametric antithetical agendas undermine such endeavours. As Ball (1994b;16) so succinctly puts it, education policies are

typically the cannibalised products of multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas. There is an ad hocery, negotiation and serendipity within the state, within the policy formulation process.

In consequence, the state fails to maintain a balance between its espoused declarations and the social conflict inherent in policy constitution and as a corollary to this policy implementation is confounded (Marshall and Patterson 2002). As Ball (1994c;108) contends “ we should not always expect to find policy coherence and should not be surprised to see struggle within the State over the definition and purpose of policy solutions”. For instance, even though inclusion has become an increasingly prevalent policy imperative, there is an assemble of other more powerful policies which encourage the ascendancy of market forces within the education system and “impinge on the development of inclusive schools” (Florian 1998;105). The contradictory and ambivalent nature of policies is also evinced within the policies themselves and it is occasionally the case that the texts, which are the “actual” policy,

are fraught with contradictions, generalities and are occasionally vague and in many instances idealised. These texts, using Norwich's (1996) terminology, are characterised by an "ideological impurity" or in other words, by a "discursive multicapitality" (Taylor 2004;434), in the sense that several contradictory discourses co-exist and are in tension. In effect, texts can be interpreted in varied ways within the "context of practice" whereby policy is remade through the "hegemonic knowledge" of the social actors and the material constraints that are imposed on them.

In this respect, educational policy may be seen as an incessant succession of "crises" and "settlements" whereby the ideas of conflict and struggle are inherent in the policy process. Within this struggle the most powerful interest groups manage to construe and impose their own realities through which the predominant educational policy will emerge. The compromise achieved, however, will sooner or later be dissolved due to its internal inconsistency and a new crisis will ensue (Grace 1991).

The context of text production can be, in a way, characterised as the settlement whereby the divergent ideologies, interests and power relations come in a balanced assemble, albeit a precarious one. Within the period of settlement educational policy is imbued by certain principles, which steer the educational system, in the sense that they provide the broader policy framework or the "discursive contours" within which pursuant struggles will take place. The apparent stability, however, will be challenged as soon as new socio-political, educational, and economic agendas ascend within the policy-making process. The ascendancy of these agendas is the result of political exigencies, partly emanating from influential international imperatives that necessitate the re-appraisal and modification of the current state of affairs. Foucault's geneology and the concept of emergence, capture the changeable and inconsistent nature of policy, which by no means can be characterised as a mere result of historical development. Rather, it can be characterised "as a stage in the warlike confrontation between opposing forces in the quest for control and domination" (Marshall 1990;19).

Pre-eminent consideration should therefore be given to the ever-changing role that ideology, politics, economics and interest groups play in the formation and implementation process (Grace 1991). Accordingly, Ozga (2000:114) contends that:

Education policy is not confined to the formal relationships and processes of government, not only to schools and teachers, and to legislation affecting them. The broad definition requires that we understand it in its political, social and economic contexts, so that they also require study because of the ways in which they shape education policy... One way of approaching this is to look at the history of education policy making and its accompanying narrative of explanation of education policy that is provided by policy research.

This being the case, it can be held that education policy analysis cannot be limited to a specific parameter as might happen in other areas of social analysis. The “specific” in policy analysis is primarily concerned with the subtle and multifarious interactions of the various parameters within the broader framework. The bigger picture of educational policy analysis is an aggregation of its constituent parts, within an interactive and reciprocally related network of power relations. Simultaneously, of critical consideration should also be the fluid, contingent and ever-changing nature of education policy and the frequent unintended outcomes that might ensue, due to the multiple interpretations and constant recontextualisation that are endemic within the policy landscape. There seems little doubt that any kind of mono-dimensional analysis fails to provide as Ball (1994b;10) contends “ a decent theory of education policy”.

The focus of investigation should be initially placed upon social actors’ constructed “knowledge” within the context of influence and the subsequent context of text production, along with the pursuant conflicts, through which education policymaking emerges. This “knowledge” is influenced by ideologies, interests, aspirations, political exigencies, historical conjunctures, and constitutes the powerful discourses through which educational policymaking is contested and eventually contextualised within the “policymaking cycles” (Ball and Bowe 1992). Even though the context of influence does not coincide with the context of text production, it is within this context that the context of text production emerges. The context of influence encompasses a powerful and pervasive discourse, which, albeit not relayed in its original state, it is immensely influential and inevitably submerges, overtly or covertly, the context of text production.

Powerful discourses, however, do not emerge only from social actors, but from the institutional conditions through which discourses are regenerated, bolstered and transformed. Relations of power are as Foucault (1981; 94) contends productive and

they are not “ in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships...) but are immanent in the latter” (cited in Ball 1994b; 20) Policy analysis, in this sense, presupposes an in depth investigation of the ways that power circulates and “ is embedded/ embodied in every aspect, agent and agency involved in the policy process” (Evans 1994; 59) Particular emphasis, therefore, should be also placed on the ways that institutions promote, sustain or obliterate certain discourses and how these discourses are contested and reconstituted within institutions. Ultimately, it is through institutions that the most powerful actors can relay their constructed knowledge, and exert in unobtrusive ways their discourse, which is powerful only because it might be institutionally established.

Having pursued an understanding of the processes inherent in the institutional conditions or structures, it is crucial to establish interactive relations and consequential effects within the interplay of actors and structures, namely the reciprocal and multiple interaction of ideologies, politics, interests and other historical conjunctures, with economics and institutional structures. This investigation should also extend to the context of practice, which is affected and framed, albeit not determined, by the two other contexts. The context of practice is a distinct arena, whereby beyond the hegemonic knowledge that is inevitably relayed from the other two contexts, it entails its own hegemonic knowledge, which results in a new cycle of “policy making”.

1.4 Cyprus Special Education Policy Analysis

The island of Cyprus is an interesting case study not only because it constitutes a distinct socio-political context with a very recent history of special educational policymaking, but it is also a context, which, by implication, assimilates to a great extent policies and practices from other dominant contexts. It is characterised by processes of “policy borrowing”, occasionally resulting in policies being uncritically inserted, into its idiosyncratic historical context. Immanent conflicts and struggles are also “borrowed”, as the “imported” policies are uncritically relayed and assimilated within an entirely unprepared and disoriented historical context with a “shallow” educational policymaking tradition. Policy borrowing is not, however, a unique characteristic of the Cyprus context. Levin (1998) for instance, refers to this as

international trend, and characterize it as “epidemic of education policy”, inasmuch as policies are spread either in haphazard and uncontrolled ways or through coordinated networks of dissemination.

Despite these considerations, however, policy borrowing does not beget homogeneity in policy between the different countries. This is because, local powerful policymakers, namely politicians and officials are not so much concerned within the specificities of these policies, but they are more likely, as Halpin and Troyna (1995; 306) comment “to be interested in a borrowed policy’s political symbolism than its details”. Along the same lines, albeit within an extended perspective, Dale (1999) talks about the effects of globalization on national policymaking, and the paradigmatic shift that national policies are inevitably subjected. Notwithstanding, however, the overarching influence of globalization in the name of international competitiveness, it is evident, according to Dale (1999;3) that “...the effects of globalization are mediated, in both directions and in complex ways by existing national patterns and structures...” Understandably, the political discourse is infiltrated or even reshaped according to policymakers’ own motives, interests, aspirations, values and beliefs and according to the local historical and political exigencies (glocalization). As Arnove and Towes (2003; 3) put it ; “...there is a dialectic at work by which global processes interact with national and local actors and contexts to be modified , and, in some cases, transformed...” It is, therefore important to delineate how the politics of policy borrowing are evinced within the different socio-political contexts and how they are implicated within the local policymaking agenda.

The present study attempts to delineate the reciprocal interaction between the structural dynamics and the political dynamics that shaped Cyprus special education policies since the inception of the first special education policy in 1979. In particular, the present piece of research is a case study for the investigation of the political, ideological and structural processes of special educational changes in Cyprus, and the ensuing struggles and conflicts that are implicated within the incessant cycles of policymaking. The aim will be to establish and explicate the different discourses that co-exist and shape the idiomorphic discursive mosaic, upon which Cyprus special educational policymaking is predicated.

It is important to begin by examining the shaping and reshaping of contexts of influence since 1979 when the first special education Law was introduced, and concomitantly to provide a succinct account of the parameters, namely the ideologies, the interests, politics, historical conjunctures and structures that are embedded in these processes. This can be achieved with the use of contemporary historical methods (Ball 1990) in order to construct a framework within which represents the ways in which major changes have occurred and social, political, ideological and economic contestations have taken place. In other words, the adoption of a combination of historical and sociological perspectives will enable me to identify the ideological, political, cultural and economic factors as well as the power relations immanent in them that have shaped special education policies.

It is interesting to examine how each time ideologies were infiltrated and contested within the local socio-political and economic circumstances thereby leading to the emergence of the context of text production and the subsequent context of practice. Within this analysis it will be also possible to identify the macro and micro level factors that serve as impediments to educational change, either from a top-down or a bottom up perspective. Ultimately, primary emphasis will be given to the current policy context or borrowing Foucault's phrase, "today's discourse" whereby the politics of educational change towards an inclusive educational system are still going on and the consequences are to be seen and evaluated.

The research will consist of three different phases. The first will be an investigation of the historical and sociological context within which special education policies have emerged since 1979. The focus will be to investigate the legislative, the structural, political, cultural and ideological changes, which have had a major impact on the consecutive special education policies. In particular it would be interesting to investigate the gradual turn from the special education policy of segregation dating from 1979, to the integrative policies of 1999 and 2001. The second phase will be concerned with the investigation and exposition of the current policy context as this is constituted by the endemic and idiomorphic struggles for inclusion. The last phase will provide a critical analysis of the future challenges and possibilities towards the construction of an inclusive education system, with the emphasis placed upon primary

education. The three phases will be examined through an interactive perspective whereby their interrelations and consequential effects will be concomitantly established, and anticipated.

The scope of the research will be circumscribed within the following research questions:

- 1) How special education policies evolved in interaction with the contemporaneous structural and political dynamics?
- 2) In what ways are beliefs and ideologies linked to economic, social and political considerations?
- 3) How asymmetrical power relations are evinced within the Cyprus policy context?
- 4) What is the discourse and objectives that powerful social actors hold regarding inclusive education?

1.5 Inclusive education, the struggles for change and educational policy analysis

Inclusion is the buzzword underpinning the current philosophy and legislation, as far as the education of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is concerned. Inclusive education heralds a new era and constitutes a conceptual revolution, characterised by concerns for educational restructuring as it purports to represent a paradigm shift from the resilience of special education imperatives. Moving from segregation to integration, inclusive discourse represents an ideological and rhetorical shift, and thereby, policies and practices that place disabled students in a “less than human position” are vehemently rejected. In this respect, inclusion emerges from an entirely different knowledge basis, where diversity is the norm (Karagiannis et al 1998) and considered as part of human experience (Ainscow 1998).

Inclusion is understandably, inherently different from integration as each are formed by different antecedents. Whilst integration is primarily concerned with the relocation of disabled children in unchanged and monolithic education systems, inclusion primarily presupposes the organizational, curricular and structural change of schools, in order to respond to students’ diversity. As Vlachou (2004;14) poignantly puts it:

Inclusion is about the curriculum and an exploration of the reasons that the educational apparatus has failed to create opportunities for meaningful participation of its learners...It is about issues of power, control, discipline, priorities and passive conformity to established sets of values and practices.

By implication, inclusion is alleged to be the response to the flawed ways that the education of disabled children has been so far predicated, as it emanates from a new theorization of disability, whereby disability is not solely attributed to individual deficits. Rather, it is attributed to environmental and ideological disabling barriers that impede the social, intellectual and emotional development of disabled children. Understandably, given this interactive framework, inclusion and inclusive education reject the assimilationist view of integration, whereby the focus is on the normalization of disabled people, and advocate instead a rights discourse approach (Barton 1993; Rioux 2002; Kenworthy and Whittaker 2000).

Ware (2004) very succinctly characterizes inclusion as one of the most “rancorous debates in the field”. This can be partly attributed to the fact that inclusion is as a multi-layered concept embedded in a plethora of political, social, psychological and educational contexts (Benjamin 2002) and as result it can be understood in multiple ways. The notion of inclusion can therefore, be characterised as a political act that is informed by a variety of divergent discourses (Armstrong and Barton 1999;76). The interplay of these antithetical discourses vying for dominance is intense and the bases upon which the realisation of an inclusive discourse is predicated, seem precarious and ready to collapse. In consequence, the quest of an inclusive discourse within mainstream settings becomes a rather complicated, contentious and indeed, problematic issue.

Post-modern and post-structural accounts are eclectically deployed and offer “emancipatory alternatives” that can potentially open up new possibilities for policy analysis. Foucault interrogates the existence of objective knowledge through the identification of multiple interpretations of meaning that arises amidst a “discursive upheaval” of unequal power relations. Deconstructive reading or “dismantling” and “disassembling critique” (Peters 1999,par.6.1) urges us to expose the power/knowledge grid that constitutes educational policymaking. The aim is to look beyond the meaning of inclusive policies and divulge the “various rhetorical and metaphorical devices that are used to gloss over their contradictions, inconsistencies

and silences”(Skrtic 1991; 36). Put simply, the aim is to expose the impediments to inclusion which emanate from the “individualistic gaze” placed upon the students’ “deficits”, rather than on the disabling procedures, structures and mechanisms that subvert inclusion. Ultimately then it will be possible, as Slee (1997;413) succinctly puts it, to “interrogate the meaning of inclusion” and thereby the aims of inclusive education policies.

This is, however, an extremely thorny and arduous task since, as earlier pointed out, the discourses that permeate inclusion have as Armstrong (1999;76) contends: “Multiple meanings, used by different people in different contexts, and are commonly used in ways which mask the attitudes, social structures and processes which produce and sustain exclusions”. Inclusion is occasionally used as a euphemism of exclusion (Barton 1998), which is rhetorically disguised and embellished within inclusive education policies. In this respect, given the wider social, political and economic reality, inclusive education policy imperatives are occasionally characterised by reductionism, in the sense that inclusion is constricted to the antiquated special educational framework (Slee 2001a), thus reflecting an obscure, ambiguous and essentially unchanged philosophical orientation.

Crucially, given the contentious issues at hand, the struggles for change will be better understood if they are placed within their broader political and ideological context and if they are considered as being at the centre of educational policy analysis rather than in its periphery (Grace 1991). The existence of polarised ideologies create tensions and contradictions within the educational apparatus and permeate the attempts for educational change. Different social actors have multiple realities and contradictory “regimes” or “politics of truth” (Foucault 1980a) and as a result, they uphold different notions of disability and education. These multiple conceptual constructions constitute powerful discourses that permeate consciousness and institutions and eventually get reified and sanctioned. As far as disability is concerned, it is regarded as either being a social construct, a social creation (Tomlinson 1982), or a matter of personal deficit.

The aforesaid regimes of truth constitute powerful and pervasive discourses that multifariously affect special educational policy and practice. Special education has been so far entangled in the ideologies of “professionalism” and “expertism” whereby

power relations are constituted and regenerated through the segregating policies and practices. In effect, despite the current international rhetoric about inclusive education, ample evidence suggests that practice has quite the opposite effects (Norwich 2000; Slee 2001b).

Professionals, based on the so-called “scientific” knowledge, construct powerful discourses that depoliticise disability (Tomlinson 1982) and privilege the status quo of individual pathology and deficit. Their discourse is “institutionally sanctioned” (Brantlinger 1997; 432) and therefore it is immensely powerful and pervasive within all the contexts of special educational policy and practice whereby “asymmetrical power relations” are established and sustained (Thompson 1984). Within these structures professionals and powerful social actors are involved in attempts to exert an “ideological control” over disabled children and their parents, and get empowered to impose their own “socially constructed knowledge”. The interplay of unequal power relations and the “linguistic manoeuvres” used to obscure and naturalize them, legitimate and perpetuate the status quo of special educational thinking and practice and encumbers to a great extent the educational restructuring attempts.

Educational change presupposes that policymakers within all arenas of the educational apparatus become aware of the disabling ideological and institutionalised structures and the unequal power relations inherent in them, which sustain and reproduce the status quo. In this respect, disability should be understood as a discursively construed social process, within a particular social context, and special education should be conceptualised as socially constructed category that emanates from “asymmetrical power relations”, which are reified through the institutional structures of a particular socio-political system. The sociological perspective has the potential, as Tomlinson (1982; 24) propounds, to analyse and ultimately deconstruct the “ structures of power and the way power is legitimated...” through the institutional and ideological infrastructure of a particular socio-political system.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to provide an alternative voice to the scientific exegeses upon which special education policy and practice have been traditionally predicated. It is an interrogation of the conceptual status quo that has traditionally had a powerful influence in the field and discriminated against disabled children and their advocates.

Post-modern accounts provide an enlightened meta-theory of special education that envisions the demolition of individual pathology imperatives. The pluralistic character of this form of theorization of special education challenges the confinements of functional thought and seeks to bring to the surface the power/knowledge grid that constitutes what has come to be known as special education.

Educational policies are constituted within a discursive upheaval of unequal power relations. Education policy analysis seeks to divulge the micro-technologies of power, emanating both from actors and structures, and expose the regimes of truth that constitute policy and practice. It is a dialogical and never-ending process that it is very difficult to depict and dissect. Despite, however, the elusive character of this endeavour it is a necessary task if we are to understand the reasons why the road towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse is an extremely “difficult and disturbing task” (Barton 1997;232).

Defining as a spatial and chronological context the island of Cyprus in the emergence of the 21st century, the study aims to explore the alternative knowledge basis of special education, the knowledge that is indispensable from power and permeates the ideological and structural edifice of the country. The process of unveiling will be both exciting and demanding and will introduce the reader to a convoluted and interactive network whereby the paraphernalia of scientific thought has a minor role to play. Hence, the aim is to look behind special education and find its essence through the discursive upheaval of unequal power relations. This said, the following chapter attempts to make transparent the inherently political nature of educational policymaking and concomitantly, to provide a pluralistic framework for the analysis of special education policy constitution and dissemination within a particular socio-political context.

CHAPTER TWO

Educational Policymaking Pluralism

Introduction

Educational policy in contemporary and dynamic socio-political systems is a rather complex and hence, a problematic issue. By implication, the conceptualisation of educational policy as a linear process of policy formulation and implementation, within a “state control” mode over education, is increasingly disavowed and replaced by a more complex and dialectical process (Ball and Bowe 1992). This is because there is a profusion of overt and covert structures underpinning the policymaking process that are in a reciprocal and dynamic relationship (Berkhout and Wielemans 1999). Thus the articulation and implementation of educational policy is not a smooth and rationalised process as it is implicated within a plethora of functions, whereby as Wolfensberger (1990) succinctly puts it, the “latent functions” might be diametric opposite to the “proclaimed functions”, thereby insinuating the surreptitious micro-technologies of power (Foucault 1977) impinging upon policy constitution and dissemination.

In effect, the policy development process is imbued by several contradictory considerations that are contingent upon the relationships between education, politics and the economy. In many instances, policies pertaining to the same “agendas”, promote inherently incompatible aims and perspectives as “competing discourses are ‘stitched together’ ” (Taylor 1995;9 cited in Ball 1998; 126) and confound educational policy implementation (Marshall and Patterson 2002). Education policy should, therefore, be conceptualised and explained in terms of the “ changing ideological, economic and political parameters of policy and to relate the ideological, political and economic to the dynamics of policy debate and policy formulation” (Ball 1990; 9).

This is a multifaceted and hence, a demanding process that seeks to examine the multitude of complementary, adversary and interactive elements that constitute the complexity of educational policymaking process within the consecutive cycles of policy formulation, recontextualization and implementation (Ball and Bowe 1992). Thus, whilst aiming at pursuing a comprehensive analysis of educational policymaking process, it is important to disentangle and examine these constitutive elements within the “policymaking cycles” and discern all these instances whereby the “loci of power” are constantly shifting (Bowe et al 1992) in complex and interactive ways.

It is important to begin by explicating educational policymaking in terms of a highly political activity or a “struggle”, whereby the advocates of different political frameworks compete with each other in order to impose their own frameworks within an incessant process of policy “recontextualization”. The second element under scrutiny should be the economic and institutional conditions that either bolster or pose structural confinements to the relative autonomy of the agents and their political activities. Finally, the role of ideology, which overlaps the two previously referred elements, since it is both constituted by and constitutes the agent (as it is regenerated through institutions), will be analysed and explicated. The theory of ideology, and the discursive power that emanates from it, can, in a way, tilt the balance away from mono-dimensional and binary analyses of educational policymaking and towards an all-encompassing framework, whereby the interplay of the factors that underlie both actors and structures, is acknowledged and established as a potent means of social analysis.

2.1 Educational policy-making as a political struggle.

Fulcher (1989) asserts that policy is the result of intense struggles between different social actors, whose interests, aspirations and beliefs occasionally collide, and render policymaking a demanding task. According to their interests and beliefs, the various social actors advocate towards social policy frameworks and those that emerge as dominant can affect the whole policy system (Riddell 2002). Thus, policies, are as Kogan (1975:55) asserts, the “authoritative allocation of values; the operational

statements of values” that emanate from the most powerful social actors with divergent “worldviews” or “paradigms” (Skrtic 1995;5), which are vying for supremacy and dominance. From a discourse perspective, whereby language is recognised as a potent source of social power, policymaking is regarded as being implicated within the “politics of discourse” (Yeatman 1990) whereby different discourses compete for ascendancy (cited in Fulcher 1989). In this respect, policymaking is inevitably denoted by “asymmetrical power relations” (Thompson 1984) that determine both the formal and informal facets of educational policymaking.

Given the complexity of issues, there is not a rational model in legislation, as written policy is not always translated into enacted policy, thus leading to the failure of national or government policy. An example of the discrepancy that exists between written and enacted policy is clearly evinced in the Cyprus context, whereby even though inclusion currently constitutes a major policy imperative, enacted policy is to a great extent, still exclusionary and segregating.

The failure of government policy cannot be merely explained based on the “gap” model of educational policy. This would be a rather simplistic and reductionist explanation, in the sense that it depolitizes educational practices and assigns power only to government or politicians (Fulcher 1989). In other words, the limitation of policymaking to the examination of policy “formulation” and “implementation” as distinct processes, is a form of binarism that fails to give prominence to the dynamic and reciprocal relationship of these instances of policymaking, that ensues from the interplay of macro and micro political processes. Raab (1994;14) points out that the monodimensional models of sequential policymaking presuppose an “imperative command through hierarchies that overlook the powerful interactive force of networks and/or other structures and actors in a world of pluralistic policy-making” (cited in Berkout and Wielemans 1999;404). In consequence, the distinction between “formulation” and “implementation” is substituted by the conception of policy process as generated and implemented “within and around the educational system” (Ball and Bowe 1992;98).

In this respect, Fulcher (1989) based on Hindess's theorization of educational policy, proposes a model whereby all practices are inherently political (Barton 1987; Fulcher 1989) as they are based upon theoretical, political and moral discourses which are informed by hierarchical value-systems which are entrenched, as Demaine points out (1981;13), in a "range of arenas of political struggle where educational policy is debated and decisions made"(cited in Fulcher 1986;14). Within these arenas most policies are "reworked, tinkered with, nuanced and inflected through complex processes of influence, text production, dissemination and, ultimately, recreation in context of practice" (Ball 1998; 126). Thus, within the various formal or informal arenas, the various social actors (Hindess 1986) make their own decisions and adopt a determinate stance towards educational issues.

From this point of view, educational reform is the result of the resolutions and activities of the most powerful social actors who exert power and impose their own conceptual frameworks, desires and aspirations within all arenas of the educational apparatus, which in turn, have the potential to restructure and construe new social, political and economic realities. It is in this respect that advocates of change should put great emphasis on those domains, as David and Greene (1983;134) put it, that are related with the people and their roles rather than materials or structures. Thus even though social actors are to some extent subject to structures, are concomitantly regarded as being "over and above" them and therefore they are able, given the incentives and the favourable conditions, to alter the structural bases of the status quo and introduce change.

However, even though, the immense contribution of agents as a "locus of control" (Baert 1998) is indubitable, social life is not as Hindess (1986;115) asserts reducible to "the constitutive action of actors". Thus, structuralism is ubiquitous and inevitably impacts on educational policies and practices in more subtle, however, ways, since the concept of "determination" is replaced by that of "delimitation" (Ball 1990). In this respect, the actions of the various social actors are influenced and constrained, but not determined, by the underlying socio-economic structures which pose ideological and pragmatic confinements, thereby occasionally resulting in the emergence of a conflict from ideological predilections and the needs of the status quo of capitalist economy (Fulcher 1989). As Wright (1979;15-16) points out:

Structural limitation .. is especially important for understanding the sense in which economic structures “ultimately” determine political and ideological structures: economic structures set limits on possible forms of political and ideological structures, and make some possible forms more likely than others, but they do not rigidly determine in mechanistic manner any given form of political and ideological relations (cited in Ball 1990;13).

In the same vein whilst acknowledging that social actors are “catalysts” for change, Shapiro (1980;212) points out that educational change “may proceed only to the extent that is congruent with the needs or goals of that structure.” This being the case, “it is maintained that ‘well meaning’, individual intentions, constrained by organizational and structural demands, often result in unexpected consequences” (Barton 1999b;142). By implication, it can be held that the attempts at educational reform should not be limited to a focus upon actors’ intentions. Rather, the focus should be also placed on the attempts to change the institutional infrastructure of a given socio-political system, along with the processes that are endemic in this infrastructure. As it is succinctly stated:

Political actors of course are not unaware of the deep and fundamental impact of institutions, which is why battles are so hard fought. Reconfiguring institutions can save political actors the trouble of fighting the same battle over and over again (Thelen and Steinmo 1992;14 cited in Fitz et al 1994;53).

Educational policy, is evidently embedded within a plethora of complementary and adversarial parameters that intersect and produce a “complex chain effect” (Welton and Evans 1986:213 cited in Fulcher 1990;3) or in other words, a multidimensional and interactive network, which is comprised both by structures and actors. This perspective is predicated upon an all encompassing framework, focused on interdependences and interactions and which provides a more holistic outlook of educational policy making (Squipp 1984), with the emphasis placed upon the “ dual interplay of agency and structure in the creation of historical periods” (Ranson 1995;442).

This holistic outlook is a sine qua non prerequisite of critical policy analysis whereby the aim is to disassemble the contextual backdrop of educational policymaking through the

examination of the politics and ideologies and interest groups of the policy making process; the making visible of internal contradictions within policy formulations, and the wider structuring and constraining effects of the social and economic relations within which policy making is taking place (Grace 1991;26).

Given this inter-connective framework, the role that ideology plays in the formation of policy is crucial, as ideology is variously interlinked with power, politics and socio-economic structures. As Ball contends (1990; 5): “A finer, more precise identification of ideologies and influences is necessary to capture the complexity of recent educational policymaking”. Thus in what follows the endeavour will be to selectively explain some of the definitions of ideology and elucidate the most prominent parameters and processes implicated therein. Simultaneously, it will be possible to explicate in what ways ideology and the discursive power that emanates from it, is variously interlinked both with actors and structures in a reciprocal and complex relationship. Having done this, it will be possible to begin to provide a conceptual framework of the ways that a pluralistic model of policy analysis can be constituted and realised.

2.2 Ideology; The interplay of ideas

Ideology, the delimitation of which in a single definition would seem utterly inappropriate, can be seen from a multitude of perspectives and angles. Eagleton (1991) refers to more than fifteen definitions of the word, whilst Dale (1986) suggests that ideology is a “conceptual chameleon” (cited in Burbules 1992) thus implying its multidimensional character. Not surprising then, it can be held that the emergence of the various definitions of ideology render the word in a way insignificant since, according to Eagleton (1991;7) “any word which covers everything...dwindles to an empty sound.” However, notwithstanding these scepticisms, ideology is “at work in everything we experience as reality” (Zizek 1994;17) and it is, therefore, essential, to be selectively defined and analysed according to the intended scope of analysis.

Ideology can be characterised as a portmanteau or an overarching word that encompasses three levels of knowledge or conceptions of knowledge that are interlinked and interactive. The three levels of knowledge consist of the world that is

“out there”, as a separate and objective entity (reality), the world as perceived and interpreted by the characteristics of the human mind (thought), and the way that this understanding (or thought) is reshaped by the unique characteristics of a particular society (Watt 1994). Thus, ideology encompasses both cognitive and affective elements whereby, however, the latter outweigh the former. It can be held as Eagleton (1991;19) comments, that ideology “typically displays a certain ratio between empirical propositions and what we might roughly term a “world view”, in which the latter has an edge over the former” Ideology, however, is defined not only as the accumulative result of values and belief systems, but also as a matter of power. The definitions of ideology can, therefore, be placed on a continuum, the two edges of which offer different standpoints.

The first version of ideology, which is concerned with values and beliefs, is the “universal version” of ideology (Watt 1994) or the “neutral conception of ideology” (Thompson1984). Within this version, ideology is defined as the accumulative result of various “conceptual schemes” that select the most important features from the world and construe new meanings about reality (Watt 1994). From this perspective, the debate whether ideology is premised upon truth or falsehood is, as Althusser (cited in Eagleton 1991) purports, in a way groundless because ideology is actually the way that someone “lives” her relations to society and therefore it cannot be based on erroneous grounds. Thus the conceptual schemes that construe ideology are in essence a selective conceptualisation of the presumable most important elements of the world rather than “ a distorted or fabricated” representation of it (Watt 1994;218). In the same vein, Thompson (1984;6) writes that ideology “ is not a pale image of the social but it is a part of that world...” Thus the role of ideology, as a poststructuralist form of social analysis, which disavows the existence of an external and objective social world, becomes important and needs critical examination and consideration.

From this perspective, Mannheim disavows the existence of objective truth, in spite of the fact that some people might construe more accurate representations of it. Similarly, Berger and Luckmann (1971) advocate towards relativism and the “social construction of reality” through their related book (cited in Watt 1994). Anderson (1990;43) refers to the “ critical or “radical” constructivist view according to which, “ the structures of knowledge within society are generated through social interaction

and are closely related, if they are not derived from, interests of different groups within the social structure...”

This is consistent with the postmodernist view of relativism, which eschews fixed and preordained notions of reality and knowledge, and thereby aims at challenging and “deconstructing” these certainties. Relatedly, Foucault talks about the existence of multiple “knowledges” that are constructed by different people implicated within different power relations. In this respect; “ ‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A regime of truth” (Foucault cited in Atkinson 2002;78). Particularly, ideology for Foucault is not gauged against the binary poles of truth or false statements. Put differently, the crucial distinction regarding the notion of ideology does not lie to the arbitration of the extent that an ideology is true or false, but rather it is concerned with providing the theoretical and methodological credentials for seeing “historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses, which in themselves are neither true or false” (Foucault 1980;18 cited in Howarth 2002;117).

Understandably, the second definition of ideology is implicated with power and it is concerned with the emergence of truth and knowledge through relations of domination. This is the critical conception of ideology whereby ideology is given negative connotations and is encapsulated as a process of “sustaining asymmetrical relations of power that is a process of maintaining domination”(Thompson 1984;4). From this perspective, “ideology” is deployed by the ruling class and used as a means to dominate and exert influence on other peoples’ thinking. “ The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas :ie, the class which is the ruling material force in a society is at the same time the ruling intellectual force.” (Marx and Engels, 1932/1976;67 cited in Watt 1994;2). Domination, should not, however, as Thompson (1984;130) asserts, be perceived merely as a the relation between the classes. Relations of dominations are inherent in “ between nation states, between ethnic groups and between the sexes...”

Wherever ideology is perceived and analysed as a question of power, it raises important issues concerning its credibility on the selective interpretation of the world.

In this respect, Marx characterizes ideology as a *camera obscura* as it is believed to present an “inverted picture of reality” predicated on non-scientific grounds (Marx and Engels 1947;47 cited in Burbules 1992;9) with the ulterior motive to “ ‘mystify’ the situation, circumstance, or experience of subordinate classes or dominated groups” (Purvis and Hunt 1993; 478). In so doing, it is more difficult to interrogate the ideological status quo and expunge the subordinating and corrosive effects of ideology. The mystified and intricately complicated attributes of ideologies are proliferated by the fact that ideologies are never “single”. Therefore the “disentangle” endeavour should be directed according to Blommaert (2005; 175) at “complexes of Ideological elements often seemingly incongruous with one another, but brought in action-‘articulated’ or ‘entextualised’ as a single ideology”.

Thus, notwithstanding the notion that ideology is primarily a matter of “lived relations”, some values and beliefs, that are entrenched within theses lived relations may be subjected to criticisms of truth or falsehood. Thus Skillen, an advocator of this case, raises the following pertinent questions; “ Sexist ideologies do not (distortingly) represent women as naturally inferior? Racist ideologies do not confine non-whites to perpetual savagery?”(cited in Eagleton 1991). From this perspective, reality is not only selectively interpreted and constructed but it is also misinterpreted and distorted. In consequence, certain claims and beliefs, that are either false or arbitrary, are erroneously and purposefully presented by certain groups as fair and logical. Social structures and institutions bolster the misinterpretations of those powerful and suppressive groups, and impede less privileged people to contribute their own interpretations to the “collective understanding of the world”(Watt 1994;214).

Ideology, in this respect, can be characterised as a means of control disseminated within all arenas of a socio-political system. It is used by certain groups to legitimate their domination and impose their “own understanding of the world” on the less privileged groups, thus endorsing their *hegemony* (Gramsci 1971 cited in Drake 1999). As Leonardo (2003;209) eloquently writes: “*Even making sense of the world is necessarily implicated with issues of power and therefore, is a process implicated in relations of domination*” [emphasis in the original]. The “discursively constructed reality” therefore, is constricted to certain groups who hold political and administrative power that enables them to have their reality “accepted as true by

those whose interests may not necessarily be served by accepting it” (Fiske 1989;150 cited in Apple2000a;143).

For Marx and Engels, the theory of ideology has the potential to divulge this covert imposition and ultimately deconstruct the power of the dominant class. Ideology, in this respect, is placed in a wider framework and regarded as a potent means of political and social change. As Marx (1975b;423) suggested:” the philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it” (cited in Billing 1991;4) [emphasis in original].

Accordingly, Burbules (1992;11) talks about the notion of ideology-critique, whereby the focus is placed upon deconstruction, which aims to expose the arbitrary constitution of truth, meaning and values and divulge the mechanisms which construe these illusionary “realities”. It needs noting however that these illusionary “realities” are also by themselves revealing, in the sense that they still present a reality. It is therefore, pertinent here to reiterate Lacan who claims that “ distortion and/or dissimulation is in itself revealing; what emerges via distortions of the accurate representation of reality is the real- that is, the trauma around which social reality is structured” (cited in Zizek 1994;26). In other words, even when the social reality is arbitrarily or erroneously constructed it does not cease to constitute the real or at least, what it comes to be understood as the real.

In line with the above considerations, it is useful to refer to another dimension of ideology which overlaps both previously referred definitions of ideology and can be viewed from a different perspective. Some “conceptual schemes” can be perceived in pejorative terms and characterised as “ideological”. Thus, “ Characterizing belief systems as ideologies is, in common usage, a handy way of attributing to them a host of implied failings-political contentiousness, manipulative use of language, partisan ranting, sloppiness, inaccuracy, or downright falsehood” (Barbules 1992;8). The unassailable truth, it is alleged, lies within, what Thomas and Glenny (2002;347) call, “Reason” and “Evidence” which “ can stand as knights in a shining armour”.

In this sense, ideology is readily disavowed, as a failing replica of knowledge that is arbitrarily and erroneously constituted and disseminated only by others and not by

one's self. As Eagleton (1991;2) points out, "nobody would claim that their thinking was ideological....Ideology, like halitosis, is in this sense something that other person has". In much the same way, certain thoughts and ideas are labelled as "utopian", as they are regarded as being predicated on unrealistic and non-feasible social ideals. In some occasions, Mannheim (1936) characterizes as utopian thoughts the ones which aim at the transformation of the social order (cited in Watt 1994) a stance, however, that can be characterised as biased in the sense that, it condemns, a priori, everything that eschews the status quo.

Given the above considerations, much recent debate concerning the viability of inclusive education policies, find many anti-inclusionist theorists committing themselves to "pragmatism". By implication, they denounce the notions that advocate towards inclusion and assign them in the "sphere" of ideology. In particular, Brantlinger (1997), whilst quoting pertinent examples, criticizes the so called "traditionalists", who in order to defend their negative stance against inclusion, characterize inclusionists' ideas as "ideological." What they fail to do, however, is to identify ideology in their own work. This indicates as Brantlinger (1997;436) poignantly puts it that:

they are naïve, perhaps because they have 'not read widely cross nationally or cross-disciplines'(Delamont and Atkinson 1995;3) and hence remain uninformed by important, relevant work in other fields. Because they refer to others' ideology so pejoratively, their ignorance cannot be excused as benign.

2.3 Ideology, power relations and educational policymaking

In this section the aim will be to begin to examine the ways that power is materialised, disseminated and implicated within the "social construction of reality". In particular the notion of language is examined in relation to its context and thereby, the notion of discourse is introduced as a potent means of control, implicated within the educational policymaking process.

Language is central in the attempt to analyse ideology because an “ideology, like a culture, is carried through language” (Ballard 2005; 97). The centrality of language, however, is especially true when we want to analyse ideology in terms of power relations. As Bourdieu pertinently puts it “ Language is not only an instrument of communication or even knowledge but also an instrument of power” (cited in Thompson 1984: 131). One seeks not only to be understood but also to be believed, obeyed, respected, distinguished”. It needs noting however, that it is oversimplified and questionable to assert that language always constitutes an instrument of power. Despite the fact that Nietzsche’s and Foucault’s notion that power exists everywhere is indubitable, it is important as Eagleton (1991;9) writes “ to distinguish between more and less central instances of it”. In the same token, it is important to distinguish those instances whereby language really matters as it constitutes “ an essential element of the social” (Purvis and Hunt 1993;480). Language, in this respect, should not be regarded in isolation from its social context and in consequence, ideology, which is constituted by language, should be better considered as “ as a matter of discourse than language”(ibid;480).

The importance of language, therefore, as a means of power is materialised through the “discourse” which “refers not only to the meaning of language but also to the real effects of language-use, to the materiality of language”(Codd 1988;242). In other words, the essence and therefore the power of language is evinced within a particular socio-political context and in particular, within the discursive processes of this context, which produce and sustain relations of power. These relations of power are constantly constituted and regenerated within the institutional conditions, which produce, sustain and ultimately legitimate the asymmetrical relations of power.

The power that emanates from the various discourses is thus implicated within the institutional conditions and the social structure through which power is materialised and affects policy formulation and implementation. This power is differently defined by Billing (1991;4) as the “ruling rhetoric”, whereby the pervasiveness of language is evinced, through, according to Marx and Engels, the social functions of ideas. As Ball (1990;8) contends,

Meaning thus arises not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations, from social position. Words and concepts change their meaning and their effects as they are deployed within different discourses.

Thus ideology should be examined only in relation to the context of the social world where power and domination emanate, namely within the “context of an account between the relations between actions, institutions and social structure”(Thompson 1984;4). Thus, the effects of ideology should extend to include the “material existence” of ideology as reflected in relations, practices and institutions (Althusser 1972;267-270 cited in Burbules 1992;11).

In particular, as far as inclusive education policy is concerned, the representation and maintenance of antithetical to inclusion discourses creates a plethora of powerful ideological and conceptual confinements that “penetrate consciousness”(Codd 1988;242) and are gradually materialised. Eventually, wrong discourses assign flawed meanings to the ways that inclusion is perceived and realised, as they are sustained by the institutional conditions of a given socio-political system. As Codd (1988;243) writes:

The power that is exercised through discourse is a form of power which permeates the deepest recesses of civil society and provides the material conditions in which individuals are produced both as subjects and as objects. It is this form of power which is exercised through the discourses of the law, of medicine, psychology and education.

Ultimately then, the failure of inclusive educational policies might be attributed to the “deeply entrenched discourse of disability and of the institutionalised bases which construct that discourse” (Fulcher 1990;16). In the same vein, Slee (1997;407) contemplates that the failure of educational policymakers can be primarily attributed to the failure to analyse and ultimately deconstruct the “epistemological foundations” of special education, and the discursive power that emanates from them. Inevitably then, “What has transpired is, as Bernstein (1996) demonstrates, better described as the submersion of special education interest within the discursive noises (Ball 1988) of integration and latterly inclusion” (Slee 1997;407).

By implication, it is crucial that the philosophical tenets of inclusion should be clarified and differentiated by persistent orthodoxies of the past, which have so far masked and disguised assumptions inimical to inclusion. In effect, what has come to

be termed as “discourse analysis” should also encompass the analysis of the institutional and structural elements of the social world (Thompson 1984) as well as the ways that subjectivities are “interpellated” (Althusser 1994) and hence, constituted through the prevalent ideological constructs.

The emphasis of policy documents as text should, therefore, extend to include the context or the “ broad discursive field within which policies are developed and implemented” (Taylor 1997;25), with the aim not only to better conceptualise policy, but also to demonstrate or deconstruct the subtle interactions between the various processes implicated therein, and expose any invisible and unobtrusive, albeit corrosive, forms of power. The pervasiveness of discourse is evinced, therefore, within the processes “whereby interests of a certain kind become masked, rationalised, legitimated in the name of certain forms of political power...” (Eagleton 1991;202). Change can only be pursued when we manage to deconstruct the promulgated “neutrality” of the state and its policies in order to “unmask” as Foucault points out “ the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them” (cited in Atkinson 2002;83).

2.4 Ideology and the interplay of action and structure; an all-encompassing agenda

As it has been already suggested, the debate around the interplay of agency and structures is a refractory one, that has long bedevilled both theorists and theoretical movements in general. First of all, it is important, to examine the positions which lean either towards an overemphasis of the action-oriented position or towards the structural one. The ultimate aim is to subvert the binarism that characterizes the two positions and offer a more balanced and dialectical account, viable enough to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ways that ideology is interlinked with structural institutions within an interplay of power and domination. Having said that, it is clearly evident that an ideology is not a mere representation and description of thought, but constitutes an integral part of certain structural arrangements that promote a particular generally accepted order. In other words, ideology shifts from the conceptual status towards a material status, as it is channelled and get reified through the institutional

structures and becomes indispensable from them. As Fairclough (1992b:3) put it “.. Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct and constitute them...” (cited in Mills 1997;134).

Marxist accounts give prominence to the “infrastructural bases” of ideology, namely to the socio-economic conditions that determine the limits within which the politico-ideological interests are set (Eagleton1991;199). According to Marx (1963;15), human beings “make their own history but not in circumstances of their own choosing” (cited in Cohen 1989;9). In this respect power is examined in relation to the structural perspectives of the state whilst the role of the agent is considered of secondary importance. The notion of the state and of social class is conceptualised “as objective structures and their relations as an objective system of regular connections, a structure and a system whose agents ‘men’ [sic] are in the words of Marx “bearers of it”....” (Poulantzas 1969;70 cited in Drake 1999;20)

This is however, a limited and limiting view since it downgrades the role of agent as a potent means of change. It is possible, within the stringent demands imposed by certain institutional conditions that the “hazardous play of domination” (Baert 1998;125) can be challenged and reversed by certain social actors, thus leading to the subversion of the status quo. In effect, power in Foucault’s terms does not always bear negative connotations and therefore, it is possible to override the structuralistic and hence pessimistic accounts which downplay the role of agent and negate the productive effects of power. Thus as Foucault (1980;13) contends :

I’m not positing a substance of power. I’m simply saying: as soon as there’s a relation of power there’s a possibility of resistance. We’re never trapped by power: It’s always possible to modify its hold, in determined conditions and following a precise strategy (cited in Ball 1994;176).

By implication, Hindess and Hirst reject the overemphasis on “infrastructural bases” and stress the importance of political ends and interests, which construct reality. These political ends and interests do not merely derive from social reality, but rather, they constitute the discourses through which social reality emerges (cited in Eagleton 1991). This position alone, however, is again by itself reductionist as it downplays the role of structural conditions of political action. Thus, in spite of the fact that ideology

is “subject-centred” it is not as Eagleton (1991;223) writes “*reducible* to the question of subjectivity.” This is because, “Some of the most powerful ideological effects are generated by institutions...” and hence by the structural conditions of a given socio-political context.

What is missing from Marxist and other accounts, therefore, is a conceptualisation of ideology in terms of an interplay of action and structure. The theory of structuration, articulated by Anthony Giddens (Cohen 1989;Thompson 1984;Ranson 1995) and in the work of Archer (Ranson 1995), eschews binarisms and presents an integrated account of the interplay between action, institutional and structural conditions. Giddens, for instance, explicates the ways that social action is intricately interwoven with “social collectivities” in the production of “praxis”. That is,

To speak of praxis as the constitution of social life entails a concern not only for the manner in which conduct, consequences, and relations are generated but also for the conditions which shape and facilitate these processes and outcomes.... (cited in Cohen 1989;12).

Having pursued some modifications of Giddens’ account, Thompson (1984), provides a framework whereby the three levels of the account, are multifariously interlinked and provide different outcomes depending on the emphasis given. What is presented, in summary, are the ways that agents can act within the context of institutional structures with the possibility either to reproduce these structures or to pursue a transformative action. This is congruent with a Foucaultian analysis of ideology, whereby individuals can be either deceived, by the ostensibly innocuous nature of ideologies, or be enabled to vehemently break the ideological grip and achieve emancipation, that is congruent, however, with the contextual relations and discourses preceding them (Foucault 1980 cited in Howarth 2002).

Within this account, power can be identified within the agents per se, who are able to pursue certain aims and interests, or within the social institutions, which empower the agents to pursue these ends. If it were not for these institutions, agents would have been unable to pursue them, whilst in cases where other agents or groups are systematically excluded from this “institutional empowerment”, the situation is characterised as one of domination (Thompson 1984). For instance, the various professionals that work within the field of special education get empowered by the

institutional conditions of bureaucracy, managerialism and proceduralism. Their dominating position is thus rendered “institutionally sanctioned”, and the subversion of their domination seems to require the eradication of a whole institutionalised structure, a prospect that, on the face of it, seems intimidating and in some respects elusive.

Ball (1990), based on the Althusserian conceptualisation of social systems in terms of ideological, political and economic levels, tries to disentangle the complexity of educational policy and concomitantly to offer an all-encompassing analytical framework. As he contends; “ One basic task, then, is to plot the changing ideological, economic and political parameters of policy and to relate the ideological, political and economic to the dynamics of policy debate and policy formulation” (p.8). In so doing, it is possible to discern according to Evans (1994;59), the subtle interrelations of power within the interplay of constraint (structures) and agency, whereby:

Power is exercised, or practiced, rather than possessed and so circulates through every related force and requires us to examine the way in which power, as a recursive force and form of practice, is embedded/embodyed in every aspect, agent and agency involved in the policy process.

In the following analysis the endeavour will be to examine the ideologies that lurk behind special education policymaking and identify the ways that the various definitions of ideology are implicated therein. Policies do not exist in a vacuum; they reflect underlying ideologies and assumptions in a society (Armstrong et al 2000;7), and it is indeed these ideologies that construe the dynamism that underpins special education policymaking. As Robert Lynd has succinctly observed “ the controlling factor in any science is the way it views and states its problems” (cited in Boyd 1992;505).

It is, therefore, important to present the ideologies upon which the education of disabled children is predicated and then the aim will be to explicate how the emergent discursive power influences the multiple facets of educational policymaking. At first it is pertinent to examine the ideologies that underlie educational policymaking in general before proceeding to the examination of ideologies more directly pertaining to special education policymaking. It needs noting, however, that this distinction is

merely made in terms of convenience since all ideologies are multifariously interlinked and interrelated, in much the same way as the distinction between education and special education becomes blurred and difficult to sustain.

2.4.1 The welfare state and the marketization of education

The ideologies of the market constitute an increasingly dominating discourse within the educational policymaking landscape. These ideologies are referred to as neoliberalism or New Right, and are characterised by the “increasing colonization of education policy by economic policy imperatives” (Ball 1998;122). Markets are thus regarded by their advocates as more democratic than democracy itself (Barton 1996;3), as they are believed to be the “most efficient mode of allocating resources and more responsive to individual needs” (Barton and Slee 1999:5).

From this perspective, market forces are considered to have the potential to raise standards and efficiency of the education system (Whitty et al 1998; Bottery 2000) thereby restoring, as it is claimed, the “levelling down” of achievement, which resulted from the attempts to achieve equal education outcomes for all and in more general terms, to achieve a just and more equitable society (Whitty 2002;80). The proponents of neoliberalism are thus explicitly placed against the ascendancy of welfare policies and they abhor any kind of state intervention in the lives of individuals who are presumably the only ones who know what is the best for them. Inequality between individuals or groups is regarded as a natural feature of modern societies and by no means can social intervention be used as a means to alter the natural state of affairs (Dale and Ozga 1993). The focus is now placed upon competitiveness and on “commercial rather than educational decision making” (Gewirtz et al 1993 cited in Barton 1996;37) whereby the “common good is now to be regulated exclusively by the laws of the market, free competition, private ownership and profitability...” (Apple 1988;11 cited in Rizvi and Lingard 1996;19).

Within such a system as Bottery (2000;59) contemplates, people are regarded as human resources rather than resourcefully human. Market forces in education, like monopolies in the market place that concentrate power and wealth in the hands of the

few, promote the rights of the resourceful individuals, who have full access and participation in the wealth of mainstream schools. Given the fact that the market forces in education accentuate competition and provide a mono-dimensional notion of ability (Barton 1988,1995), the rights of the so called 'less able children' "to take the same risks and seek the same rewards" (Brisenden 1986;117 cited in Barton 1988;6) are immensely constricted. Ball (1990;18) talks about the "discourse of derision" that scornfully disavows the policy initiatives of the past that purportedly devour individualism and competitive spirit. Interlinked and supplementary discourse is the "Performativity discourse" that is centred upon increased efficiency and effectiveness of the educational apparatus measured with league tables, exams results and inspector reports. The inevitable emergence of the "discourse of competition" obliterates the "lexicon on values" and concomitantly abets the "lexicon of expediency, pragmatics and financial necessity" (Ball 1998b;92).

In this respect, notions like equality and social justice are marginalized (Bottery 2000; Barton and Slee 1999; Welch 1998) and the "quasi-market" imperatives gain an ascendant role in national educational policymaking agendas (Whitty et al 1998). Similarly, Brantlinger (2004) identifies neoliberalism in the mega category of "hierarchical" ideology that aims to establish social hierarchies through competition and political submission. This is in direct contrast with the "communal ideology" that recognises human dignity, commonality and equality. Given the prominence of the hierarchical ideology within stratified and economically structured societies "working for equity and inclusion is bound to be a struggle" (Bratlinger 2004;23).

2.4.2 The ideology of control

Special education has been historically significantly predicated on psychological and medical approaches which were rooted to the "predestinative" ideology (Neave1997;13) of individual deficit and legitimated by a humanitarian ideology which purported to "protect people" from the harsher realities of life and from ordinary school life" (Belanger 2001;38). Evidently this is a restricting and restricted ideological construct which is predicated on the "pathognomonic orientation" (Jordan et al 1997;85) of an individual deficit perspective. This kind of "individualistic gaze"

places educational failure within the individual attributing it to such factors like “limited intellectual abilities, linguistic shortcomings, lack of desire and motivation to learn...” (Barton and Slee 1996;6). The eugenic views give credence and supplement the notion of individual pathology as they poignantly purported the unassailable supremacy of “nature” and “heredity” over nurture (Thomas and Loxley 2001). This paradigm, reiterating Skidmore (1996;34):

....conceptualises special needs as arising from deficits in the neurological or psychological make up of the child, analogous to an illness or medical condition. Borrowing from the medical discipline, authors often speak of the “aetiology” of a given syndrome (cited in Slee 1998b;443).

The ideology of control thus places the attention upon disabled people’s needs rather than rights, and legitimises the corrosive processes of unequal power relations that evasively saturate all kinds of paternalistic behaviour. Disabled children are increasingly relegated to the fringes of the mainstream school life as they are regarded as being impediments to the normal functioning of mainstream schools in order to respond to the demands of the resourceful individuals or the “docile bodies” (Foucault 1977) who will, allegedly, constitute the future workforce. Put differently, disabled children are in danger of being seen as a counterforce to the ambitious proclamations of rightist ideologies and as unacceptable burden (Ballard 2004), especially within the fundamentally competitive and meritocratic modern societies.

Professionals have been a powerful means for excluding disabled people, exerting in that way what Kenworthy and Wittaker (2000; 220) call “professional abuse”. The professionalization (Fulcher 1989) of disability assigns power to professionals within all arenas of educational apparatus, whose judgements and “knowledge” perform a powerful and pervasive ideological function, which is further supplemented by the existing institutionalised structures and processes.

2.4.3 The redemptive ideologies; The sociological response to disability

The sociological response to disability is analogous to the attempt to provide the “bigger picture” in educational policymaking, thereby unravelling “the collective responsibility of existing social structures and relations...” (Slee 1996;10). Disability

thus goes beyond the individual pathology imperatives, and it is placed within an all encompassing agenda. Adopting what C. Wright Mills (1961) calls the “sociological imagination”, the binary perspectives “between biography and history, between identity and structure and between personal troubles and public issues” (cited in Whitty 2000;15) are challenged. As a result, reiterating Barton (1996;4), the social response to disability involves “the dynamic interplay of biography, context and the values in forming sociological reflection.”

Given this, the “sociological imagination” considers that disability is constructed by an amalgam of processes, which give disability and special education in general, political and social dimensions. By implication, the assimilationist model of individual pathology is challenged, and through the sociological imagination, disability as Giddens (1982) suggests, entails a “critique of existing forms of society” and hence, a critique of existing forms of education, and purports the awareness of “alternative futures” (cited in Barnes et al 1999;13). This approach seeks to analyse, criticize and “deconstruct” the hidden assumptions and facts that lie behind disability and special education. Sociological frameworks, for example, attempt to reveal the value assumptions of people who exercise power and influence (Barton and Tomlinson 1981) in political arenas, where educational decision-making takes place. It needs noting that this perspective is acknowledged not only by sociologists, but also by scholars (e.g Clough and Corbett 2000) who lie beyond the spectrum of sociology.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to provide a comprehensive and all-encompassing definition of educational policy that is concerned with its constitution and dissemination within a particular socio-political system. Educational policy is defined as a political struggle implicated in a multidimensional and interactive network comprised both by structures and actors. Constitutive element of this network is the notion of ideology, which, if examined from a critical perspective, it is directly implicated in the interplay of unequal power relations emanating both from agency and structure.

Central to analysing ideology in terms of power relations is language. Language is a pervasive means of power that is materialised through discourse and permeates both actors and structures. The analysis of ideology therefore, should include the material existence of ideology as evinced within the institutional infrastructure of a particular socio-political system. Put differently, the examination of ideology is not constricted to its conceptual status but it stretches to include the ways that it is reified through the institutional edifice.

In this sense educational policy is analysed and explicated as being constituted amidst a discursive upheaval of unequal power relations and hence central to educational policy analysis is the role of discourse. The discursive constitution of reality is a pervasive means of power that renders special educational policymaking an essentially political issue. Given this, the chapter concentrates on the examination of prevalent discourses that influence special education policy and practice.

Reference is thus made to the “discourse of derision” (Ball 1990;18) and the “discourse of control” (Vlachou 2004;14), which, unlike the redemptive ideologies that primarily define disability as a political issue, they give credence and corroborate the historical imperatives of special education thinking. The antithetical ideological predilections are in a constant and intense tension for dominance and as a result educational policymaking becomes an arduous and complex discursive struggle.

What follows is an attempt to investigate the material existence of ideologies as they are evinced within the institutional infrastructure of a particular socio-political system and which bear a profound impact on the ways that special education policies are conceived and realised.

CHAPTER THREE

Inclusive Policies and Institutional Conditions

Introduction

Inclusive education policymaking is part of an interactive process and evidently, there is always a widespread tension and conflict inherent in this particular terrain, as a plethora of political, ideological and social influences are at work (Lunt 1998). The competing ideas and interpretations, that underpin inclusive education policymaking, constitute the politics of inclusion (Fulcher 1989) that as has been previously referred to, are immensely influenced by different paradigms or worldviews (Skrtic1995) as well as by the socio-economic structure of a given society (Shapiro 1980; Squip1984). Within the interactive framework the politics of inclusion are defined in multiple and even contradictory ways and render the struggles towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse a rather “difficult and disturbing task” (Barton 1997;232), both in conceptual and practical terms. As Barton and Tomlinson (1984;65) maintain, inclusion is influenced by “complex social, economic and political considerations which may relate more to the needs of the wider society, the whole education system and professionals working within the system rather than simply to the needs of individual children”.

If we are, therefore, genuinely interested in inclusive policies we should seek to dissect and establish the relations, structures and interactions, which impinge upon them. The interplay between practices, policies and actors should be the focal point of social analysis. By no means can change be achieved unless we identify and challenge the “vicious circle” within which inclusive policies are embedded (Squipp 1981).

The institutional conditions that are entrenched within a socio-political context, can have profound implications on the ways that educational policy is conceptualised and practiced (Fulcher 1989), thus enhancing or undermining the attempts made, within all arenas of the educational apparatus for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. As

Beilharz et al (1987) contend “ The problems of “radical” policy development lie mainly outside policy, in the institutions (and their traditions) into which policy will, it is imagined, be inserted”(cited in Fulcher 1989;50). In consequence, inherent in Hindess’ theorization of educational policy making, lies the “negative side of policy remade at various levels”(cited in Fulcher 1990;11), which is primarily concerned with the institutional conditions and the discourses that emerge from them and which adversely effect inclusive educational policies.

These institutional conditions impede social actors from being the prime agents of change, as they cannot engage in a rational decision making within organizations and provide, a thorough and all-encompassing examination of alternatives along with the potential consequences these might bear (Mehan 1984). Understandably, the actions of social actors and the alternatives these might entail, are delimited by the various discourses that permeate institutions. By investigating the institutional conditions of a given socio-political context the researcher can begin to trace one facet of the micro-technologies of power (Foucault 1977, 1980a,1980b) and explicate their overarching influence on inclusive education policies.

3.1 Educational policy, institutional conditions and the emergence and dissemination of power

Given the multiple accounts and perspectives that are interlinked with the conceptualisation and realization of inclusive education policies, it is important to scrutinize this interactive and multidimensional process and provide an analytical framework. This framework will identify the struggles, the conflicts and dilemmas that are inherent in special education policymaking process. Moreover, whilst referring to the institutional conditions that are implicated within this process, it will become evident that policy processes and issues are, if not inconceivable and inexplicable, very difficult to be standardized, rationalised and explained in unanimous and objective terms. What stands true for certain socio-political arena might be entirely unrepresentative for others.

In the next section I will refer to the institutional conditions that are implicated within the inclusive education policymaking process. The analysis will be based upon Fulcher's (1989) categorization of institutional conditions which is as follows: a) Constitutional, b) Legislative, c) Administrative-political and bureaucratic and d) Economic. It needs noting, however that one cannot establish a clear demarcation line between these conditions as they overlap and are interrelated.

3.1.1 Constitutional and legislative conditions

An example of power is evinced in the discourses that are employed by the state through the constitution and governmental legislation and the important influence that they exert in all arenas of the educational apparatus. Even though I would want to suggest that educational policy making is not confined within the governmental terrain, the constitutional and legislative conditions that emanate from it can immensely, even though not deterministically, influence the ways that inclusive education policies are conceptualised and realised. As Slee and Cook (1999;67) write: “..of itself the Law is not capable of eliminating disability discrimination. Paradoxically the Law can be enlisted as a tactic for disablement or enablement”.

For instance, Levin (1985) while comparing the institutional conditions of Australia and US for the promotion of equal opportunities for disabled children, refers to the Australia Constitution and stresses the fact that it does not provide any guarantees for Fundamental Rights and Individual Freedoms and therefore, it does not promote a human rights discourse as the US Constitution does. Moreover, he refers to the crucial role of parliament in introducing legislation that will protect disabled children. Concomitantly, the active role that the US federal courts play in educational policymaking is stressed, in the sense that they are concerned with the fundamental rights of disabled students, as these are represented by the constitutional requirements. Similarly, Hayes (1984) regards the courts and the development of administrative law as critical sites through which the rights of disabled children can be pursued (cited in Fulcher1989).

Moreover, social policy imperatives (Daniels 2000) can also exert a dynamic role in the ways that educational policies are conceptualised. For example the Warnock Report in England has resulted from a general advocacy of social policy towards greater equality and in particular, from the greater emphasis placed upon disabled and other disadvantaged members of the society (Lunt 1998). A human rights perspective can effectively enhance the role of the government in protecting the levels of personal autonomy and welfare of its citizens.

Riddell et al (2000) drawing on the work of Kirp (1982) and Mashaw (1983) provide an insightful account into the salient special education policy frameworks that are currently in existence in England and Scotland. In particular they refer to bureaucratic, professional and legal policy frameworks, which co-exist and are dynamically interrelated. The choice of the dominant policy framework is indicative of the ways in which special education is defined and conceptualised. As Kirp (1982;138-139) contends:

They [policy frameworks] are pursued by different policy actors for different reasons. They have distinctive potentials and equally distinctive pathologies, and tend to fall in and out of favour with policy makers over time. Choosing among these policy frameworks affects the policy system and, vitally, the supposed beneficiaries....Because choices among frameworks embody choices about the allocation of power, how these choices are made becomes a central policy question.

Crucially, particular consideration should, be also given to “disjointed incrementalism” of policy which, according to Loxley and Thomas (1997;277) refers to the “accretion of policy, as opposed to its strategic development”. In other words, new policies or new covenants are being introduced, which far from being complementary to the existing ones, are, in essence, antithetical. The emergence of contradictory policies by the governmental terrain poses profound moral and ideological dilemmas which confound policy and adversely affect implementation process. As Armstrong et al (2000;74) poignantly put it the “contradictory relationships between policies have confused and interrupted the attempts to introduce change”.

As far as inclusive education policies and the phenomenon of “disjointed incrementalism” or “incremental dissonance” are concerned, Thomas and Loxley (2001;96) provide the following succinct observation regarding the United Kingdom context:

What is happening is the layering of new policies that have a notional objective “inclusion”, on top of practices that have demonstrably contrary effects. An ungenerous observer might suggest that the government is trying to have its cake and eat it. Now, as in the early 1990’s, there exists a tension between the demands made on schools via the quasi-market and performativity and their inclusive responsibilities for those children and young adults who could not or would not adapt to this environment.

Conflict theories in education (Tomlinson 1982) assume a crucial role in revealing and explaining the inconsistencies that are inherent in the governmental terrain, as the state tries to adhere to a certain ideology and simultaneously to preserve the status quo. This is what Habermas (1973) calls “the crisis of legitimacy”. According to Tomlinson (1982;105) “ A crisis comes about when a system, in this case an education system, cannot rationally or politically meet the ideological commitments needed to maintain legitimacy”. In effect, the conflict between the egalitarian ideology and social and economic interests is evinced in inclusive educational policies. The vestiges of special educational thinking and the intrusion of market forces in education, undermine the ideological underpinnings of inclusion and eventually, lead to its subversion. In other words, the existence of contradictory policies, along with the ambivalent considerations that saturate certain policies, constitute great impediments to the realization of an inclusive discourse.

3.1.2 Administrative-political and bureaucratic conditions

Legislation can be interpreted in multifarious ways and therefore, the pursuant administrative-political and bureaucratic practices can be regarded as being relatively independent from any legislative decisions. Having said that, however, we should not undermine the influential, albeit not deterministic, role of legislation (Fulcher 1989) and the power that emerges from the discourses that are inscribed within it. The power that language exerts within inclusive education documents is central, and it is imperative to be given eminent consideration

Fulcher (1989) stresses the fact that language is used as a weapon to exclude, albeit that it has recently veered towards a more “inclusive” lexicon. Thus it is occasionally the case that concerns for parity and human rights are obliterated by the “political elasticity of language” reflected in the “clauses of conditionality”(Slee 1996) which surface strongly within inclusive educational policies. Thus, despite the fact that the principles of equity and human rights are enthusiastically promulgated, inclusive education policy documents are occasionally fraught with antithetical discourses whereby:

Different vocabularies which espouse rights and equity, are now used to describe the cosmetic adjustments to traditional practices, which when applied, maintain the powerless of disabled students....and privileges those professionals who work “in their best interests” (Slee 1996;107).

Hence, the bureaucratic, administrative and political procedures inscribed in special education policies, are proliferated by the powerful discursive means of language, and engender a solid institutional basis for the emergence and ascendancy of professionalism. Professionals according to their vested interests or the state’s interests are given through the bureaucratic processes ample “space to manoeuvre” (Slee 2001a;389) and “individualise what are, in effect, social problems....”(Tomlinson 1982;108).

Correspondingly, Weber talks about the contradiction that exists between democracy and bureaucracy (Weber, 1972,1978 cited in Skirtc 1991) and refers to the ways that bureaucracy, a discursive practice of functionalism, leads to the “disenchantment of the world”, whereby “ precision, speed, unambiguity...” are what characterize bureaucratic systems. The bureaucratic practices and procedures impose, as Weber (1970;214) points out, “unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction”(cited in Crotty 1998;187). In parallel, Bourdieu (1996a) stresses the highly structured and impervious to change nature of bureaucracies whilst examining their pervasive impact on policy development and implementation. Professionals are in a way the new bureaucrats or technocrats who invoke “the universal” as a means to wield their power in unobtrusive ways. Their personal decisions and impositions are masqueraded under the realm of “neutrality”, “expertise” and the ethics of “public

service” and hence the ethics of the Law (Bourdeau 1996a;385 cited in Lingard et al 2005;774).

The “excessive proceduralism” safeguards the school-effectiveness movement concerns for “orderliness, uniformity and adherence” (Loyd 2000;140) whereby special education needs children are considered a major threat to them. The assessment procedures, the categorization, the delayed admissions (Loxley and Thomas 1997), and the possible exclusion of disabled children are dependent upon the “unfettered discretion” of professionals (Fulcher 1989;116), which promotes their hegemonic ascendancy and simultaneously disempowers disabled children and their parents, whose voices are muted.

Professionals thus occasionally exert an ideological control over their clientele and whenever persuasion fails, then various coercive means are used in order to impose their will of power masqueraded as “will to knowledge” or “will to truth”. This ideological control and ascendancy of professionals, is best evinced by Mehan (1984;45) who contends that the role of professionals, psychologists for instance, is further enhanced by the appeal their records make to parents, due to the highly technical language they use in their reports which are “Obscure, difficult to understand and embedded in the institutional trappings of the committee meetings”. Having said that, the role of language as a powerful discursive means of imposition is again evinced through an institutionalised status.

Within however the aforesaid institutional entrappings we should not underestimate the political and administrative attempts initiated by disabled people and their advocates in order to reverse the institutionalised safeguarded asymmetrical power relations. Their failure to dismantle the powerful bureaucratic and administrative routines, cannot be merely attributed to the persistence and pervasiveness of these institutionalised structures, but it can be also attributed to disabled people’s occasionally fragmented, spasmodic and unorganised attempts to expunge the institutional status quo.

3.2.3 Economic conditions

The ascendancy of professionals is further reinforced by certain economic interests of the state which are primarily concerned with capital and class. The restructuring of capital and the increase of profits, as perceived and explained by recent Marxist accounts, presupposes that policy imperatives should be primarily concerned to enhance effectiveness and efficiency within schools. This, however, is antithetical to the proclaimed concerns for equity and justice, as the school effectiveness movement has proliferated the bureaucratic and standardized practices of school organizations and concomitantly, has jeopardised any attempts towards the realization of an inclusive discourse (Skrtic 1989). By definition the market forces are incompatible with egalitarian provision and cooperative learning thus, inevitably, resulting in conflicting and contradictory perspectives which are reflected within the bottom-level arenas of educational apparatus, namely the schools and the classrooms. For example, Thompson (1998) refers to the dilemmas that head-teachers face within their schools, which are concerned with their commitment to the principles of inclusion and the stringent demands that are imposed on their schools by the effectiveness movement.

The aim is to enhance the standards in classrooms and preserve their social order for the benefit however of the minority few, who have the potentials to advance educational outcomes at the minimum cost. Based on this presupposition, only the “rational” minority few are eligible to have access to the economic, social and political capital thus imposing a meritocratic approach, whereby the binary circle of domination-subordination is reproduced and thrives within schools, through the concept of “efficiency” and school “effectiveness”. Within this context, success is constructed in a mono-dimensional way and the binary thought distinguishes successful and failing students in arbitrary and absolutistic ways (Benjamin 2002).

The policy imperatives towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse are thus obliterated by contradictory policy considerations. The contradictory discourses are used as a “safety valve” (Tomlinson 1982) and therefore as means of social control which “consist of practices which construct patterns of social relations”(Fulcher1989;52). Professionals are used by the government to legitimate exclusionary practices within schools in favour of either the maintenance of the status

quo of class and social relations or in favour of the “commodification of education”. Further, professionals can also be characterised as gatekeepers of the state’s financial scarce resources.

Economic conditions, however, should be also examined in more pragmatic terms, namely in the ways that the state offers sufficient economic resources in order to promote inclusive policies. Peter (1998;13) poignantly points out the crucial role that adequate resourcing plays in promoting inclusive education practices. As he contends: “ ..it should remind the architects of any anticipated legislation that, without properly resourced support, this inclusive initiative may well prove at best empty if elegant rhetoric.....” Thus, in spite of the fact that economic conditions do not determinate policy and practice at other levels of the educational apparatus, they can immensely effect the discourses and practices that are deployed. Equally important, however, is the fact that economic concerns should not deflect attention from other more crucial considerations concerned with educational and ideological change (Slee 1993; Vlachou 1997).

3.3 Deconstructing legislation- Deconstructing asymmetrical power relations

Even though educational policy is diffused within all arenas of the educational apparatus, it is within the governmental terrain that the context of influence and the subsequent context of text production are conceptualised and materialised through the formal policy documents. The “diffusion” of policy, therefore, is circumscribed within the parameters set by the state, without however eschewing the possibility that new and antithetical versions of formal policy can be evinced within the context of practice. As Ball (1993;13) writes,

Textual interventions can change things significantly, but I am suggesting that we should not ignore the ways that things stay the same nor the ways in which changes are different in different settings and different from the intentions of policy authors (where these are clear).

Thus, “Policies do not normally tell you what to do; they create circumstance in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed” (ibid;12).

The conceptualisation of policy as text, which can be characterised as a celebration of “human potentiality”, as the text can be interpreted in multifarious ways, is obliterated by the policy as discourse, which sets the discursive frame within which agents within all arenas can be actively engaged in the policymaking process. Ball (1993) inaugurates and talks extensively about the policy as discourse that goes beyond and simultaneously saturates the policy as text. The struggles that are inherent in educational policymaking process, are thus according to Ball (1993;15) “ set within a moving discursive frame which articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment”. The discourses that constitute this frame emanate from those with institutional “power” who are the bearers of the “agentic marshalling of discourse” (Bacchi 2000;52).

In this respect, it is evident that “ Policy-makers’ assumptions- along with those of other significant political actors-set limits on the alternatives considered feasible for policy implementation” (Jenson 1997;294 cited in Bacchi 2000;53), as they construe and disseminate “ domains of objects and rituals of truth” (Foucault 1979b;194) Policy formulation is thus inevitably subject to intense discursive power struggles in order to “construct (a sense of) reality and to circulate that reality as widely and smoothly as possible throughout society” (Fiske 1989:150 cited in Apple 2000;43). This being the case, the policy as discourse analyst needs to identify the dominant discourses that constitute this frame (Ball 1993; Bacchi 2000), whilst concomitantly exposing the unequal power relations or the technologies of power (Foucault 1977), that are at work in the policymaking process. This can only be achieved when the researcher adopts a polymorphous approach and concomitantly, acknowledges, a priori, her values and beliefs that constitute her own “ regimes of truth”. Even if this is the case, this does not cease to be an arduous endeavour that can never be wholly accomplished, as the corrosive processes of power are occasionally difficult to be fully divulged.

Whilst acknowledging that the role of the discourse analysis, as it has been previously discussed, should not be limited to the analysis of texts in educational policy, it is primarily within this analysis that the “spatial shifting” (Armstrong 2003) of disabled children initially emerges. This spatial shifting is covertly expressed through the

various discourses that surface within the official policy documents and are implicated within asymmetrical power relations. The “state’s autocratic streak” (Evans 1994;62) is initially reflected within its official policy documents that are littered with hegemonic and pervasive discourses, that constitute and concomitantly are constituted by unequal power relations, that as Bacchi (2003;54) writes “leave the power to define “need” and “disadvantage” in those designing the policy”, thus bringing in the frontline of educational policy analysis the “dangerous and debilitating conceits of official discourse” (Humes and Bryce 2003;179). These official policy documents or the Act are, in essence, “an expression of sets of political intentions and a political resource for continual national debates...” (Ball and Bowe 1992;100) with far reaching consequences for special educational policy and practice.

The moral dimension of educational policy analysis, seeks to expose and analyse the ways that less powerful groups of people are systematically subjected to political, social and institutional dehumanising impositions, which are represented as naturalised and legitimised processes. Fulcher (1989), for instance, provides an insightful account of the ways that asymmetrical power relations, or the politics of disablement (Oliver 1990), are evinced in educational policies and practices that lead to the marginalization and spatial exclusion of disabled people. Similarly, Armstrong (2003;26) analyses the ways that power relations act as a “social quarantine” (Foucault 1977) through which disabled people are “spatially shifted and placed outside the mainstream.” The discourses inscribed in these policies constitute a kind of unassailable knowledge which privileges those who hold institutional power, since power and knowledge become indispensable. As Foucault writes:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is not power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations... (Foucault 1977;27)

An important task, therefore, is to investigate the knowledge upon which special education policy is predicated and expose the ways that this knowledge is arbitrarily constructed thus constituting a corrosive means for the exertion of power. This knowledge is produced and concomitantly produces power thus creating a circle of domination and imposition. So central is power to the constitution of knowledge that

Foucault accords primacy to power rather than knowledge. Thus, for Foucault “power would exist (although only in a virtual form) without knowledge, whereas knowledge would have nothing to integrate without differential power relations (cited in Kendall and Wickham 1999;51).

Throughout these processes of spatialization, the various issues get, as Bacchi (2000;46) writes “represented in ways that mystify power relations and often create individuals responsible for their ‘failures’, drawing attention away from the structures that create unequal outcomes” The pervasiveness of these “mystified” discourses and the asymmetrical power relations that emanate from them, are relayed to the institutions within which policies are inserted. These discourses are subsequently regenerated and reconfigured within institutions whereby the power-relations are materialised and reconstituted. These unequal power relations are eventually sanitized and legitimised thus perpetuating a cycle of domination and subordination.

This cycle can be challenged only when deconstruction extends beyond the text, to the deconstruction of social and cultural processes that are evinced through “representations in films and the media, and the built environment, the effects of legislation and embedded social practices...” (Armstrong 2003;73). The dismantling process should emerge from a top down perspective, thus initially leading to “demystification process” of the powerful discourses and unequal power relations that are inscribed within the official policy documents. The road towards inclusion is fraught with unequal confrontations between the dubious “neutrality” of State and disabled people, whose empowerment, is paradoxically debilitated from where it should have emerged; the Welfare State.

3.4 Conclusion

The abovementioned considerations provided the theoretical credentials upon which a political model of policy, based on a theory of discourse, is presented and explicated. Educational policy is conceptualised and shaped amidst a “discursive upheaval” of unequal power relations whereby the “micro-technologies of power” act in every arena of a socio-political system, not only synchronically but also diachronically.

What I mean by this is that given the theoretical predilection at hand, it is not enough to expose the interactions of micro-technologies of power currently dispersed within society, what I call as synchronic analysis, but it is also crucial to trace their configurations in the past (diachronic), namely to trace their historical provenance, as well as their overarching impact on today's interactive network of policy constitution and dissemination. Diachronic dynamics might be subtle and implicit but they are rather pervasive and corrosive because they become naturalised and thereby sacred.

Synchronic and diachronic dynamics are infiltrated, intertwined and analysed against the regimes of truth that constitute the special education policy within a particular spatial and chronological context. Undoubtedly, this is a difficult and multidimensional endeavour that is susceptible to subjectivism, something however, that is no longer reprehensible once acknowledged and confronted.

The present research aims to divulge and analyse the structural and ideological dynamics that bear a major impact on Cyprus special education policy. Historical and sociological analysis aims to trace the diachronic and synchronic perspectives that converge towards the emergence of the current state of affairs. The ideological and institutional infrastructure of a particular socio-political system is not only a matter of serendipity. Rather it is a historical, political and social product that can be very difficult to challenge or dismantle unless it is critically examined and analysed.

Cyprus is amidst an ideological conflict regarding special education and practice. The historical special education imperatives are intermingled with contemporary thinking thereby obscuring the discursive reality germane to the field. Laudable rhetoric, and its advocacy towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse, is encumbered by an array of ideological, political and economic factors.

Notwithstanding the fact that many considerations echo the international trends, there are certain considerations that are context specific and mirror deep-seated values and attitudes germane to the historical reality of the island that are either directly or indirectly related to special education. This is precisely where the necessity of a diachronic analysis lies, to trace the provenance of the exclusionary discourses that discreetly permeate not only the official policy documents but also the whole political

and social edifice of the Cyprus context. Foucault (1989a; 71) talks about the pervasiveness of the “implicit systems in which we find ourselves prisoners” (cited in Blades 1997;95), which act obscurely, albeit incisively, for the constitution of modern biotechnologies of power that construe and subjugate individuals.

Today’s discourse is indeed an amalgam of diachronic and synchronic dynamics that render educational policymaking a profoundly complicated procedure that by no means can be confined in the stringent regimes of the governmental arena. It is, however, within these governmental regimes that today’s discourse is legitimised, established and consolidated through the rationalised institutional procedures of the ostensibly neutral and benevolent state.

Key policy actors are in important ways the personification of the state that uphold the sanitized accounts that reproduce and disseminate the existing vicious circle of unequal power relations. Being members of the Cyprus society themselves, they bear the fears, the biases and values of the whole population whilst concomitantly they infiltrate their indigenous predispositions and personal interests with the interests of the state as well as with the international requirements of the global economy.

Having to reconcile contradictory requirements, considerations and values, key policymakers occasionally find themselves trapped in the suppressive effects of discourse that is constituted by “a body of anonymous and historical rules” (Foucault 1972; 117 cited in Shaafsma 1999;63) Thus, even though policymakers have the “sovereign power” (Foucault cited in Popkewitz and Brennan 1999) to impose their own discursive realities and contribute to the constitution of today’s discourse they are, at the same time, imprisoned in the pervasive and negative effects of discourse. Their will to truth is occasionally encumbered by deep-rooted ideological and institutional entrapments that subjugates them and renders them susceptible to the effects of power. As Foucault (1997b;291) so pertinently puts it:

.... the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self [although] these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself [sic]. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested and imposed upon him by his culture, his society....(cited in Goldstein 2003;232)

What follows is an attempt to expose some of the key micro-technologies of power inscribed not only in the official legislation but also in the historical, social, political and institutional realities of the Cyprus context. The fine meshes of power inscribed in the policymaking process are traced and analysed within an interactive network that consists of a panoply of legislative, historical, social and political micro and macro dynamics that constitute an essentially idiomorphic special education policymaking landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Cyprus context

Introduction

The previous chapter explicated the discursive contours imposed by the institutional infrastructure through which the ideological predilections of key policy actors are infiltrated and regenerated, thereby corroborating the powerful cycle of the unequal power relations. Special attention was given to the pervasiveness of the official legislation and its discursive impositions. What follows then, is an attempt to divulge the micro-technologies of power inscribed not only in the official legislation, but also in the historical, social, political and institutional realities of the Cyprus context. The asymmetrical relations of power submerging the policymaking process are identified and analysed against the discursive backdrop of a profusion of legislative, historical, social and political dynamics.

The attempt is to trace the historical provenance of the micro-technologies of power that suffuse contemporary special education policymaking. Diachronic and synchronic dynamics are rather opaque and obscure but they have a prodigious impact on the constitution of “today’s discourse”. Historical, political and social conjunctures have a pervasive effect on the incessant interplays of power that contribute to the emergence of an array of ideological and institutional entrapments that corroborate and perpetuate the status quo.

The constitution of “today’s discourse” within the Cyprus context is not however, only the result of the interplay of indigenous institutional and ideological dynamics. Central to the analysis should be the pervasive influence of globalisation, that tilts the balance towards a more extended scope of analysis, which takes into considerations the supranational contemporary influence and phenomena. The chapter, thus, concentrates on the explication of the ways that the local dynamics are infiltrated,

juxtaposed and corroborated by the global dynamics thereby providing a dialectic framework between the local and the global.

The next chapter is given over to the provenance and consolidation of certain discourses that are entrenched within the Cyprus socio-historical context and that create the discursive entrapments within which the autonomy of the social subjects to introduce educational change is contested and restricted.

4.1 Asymmetrical power relation within the Cyprus policy context

Cyprus, in alignment with the international trends, has during the last few years begun a shift, as far as the education of disabled children is concerned, towards the formation of inclusive education policies, which represent the antidote to the historical special education imperatives. This however is not an unproblematic turn as there is ample evidence that certain education policies might be based upon erroneous, yet well entrenched, theoretical and philosophical platforms (Duhaney 1999) that evasively perpetuate and consolidate discourses that subvert and jeopardise inclusion.

Inclusive education policies in Cyprus as elsewhere, are characterised by “textual hybridity” in the sense that contradictory discourses are stitched together in a paradoxical discursive assemble. In order to understand these policies and their contradictory and ambiguous nature, we should scrutinize the context-specific dynamics that have impacted on their creation and the emergence of “linguistic paradoxes” that undergird and ultimately confound inclusive education policymaking.

This holistic outlook is what Grace (1991; 26) calls “policy scholarship” as opposed to the mono-dimensional and de-contextualised “policy science” that obscures crucial parameters of educational policymaking. The essence of discourse, therefore, and the asymmetrical power relations that saturate such a discourse, encompasses a multi-angled perspective. In this sense,

...the notion of discourse has to be stretched to include the messages embedded in curricula, pedagogy and the organization of pupils for learning, as well as those generated through

Given that educational policies are in a dynamic and reciprocal relation with the wider socio-political and historical context within which they are conceptualised and implemented, what follows is an attempt to examine and analyse the context-specific ways that these dynamic and reciprocal relations are evinced in Cyprus. This is part of providing the “bigger picture” of special education policy within a particular socio-historical context, something, however, that admittedly is a thorny and in some respects an elusive endeavour.

4.2 Peculiarities of the Cyprus policy context; Some historical considerations

Despite the fact that Cyprus can be characterised as a protagonist in the politics of policy borrowing, there are certain peculiarities within the Cyprus context that shape an essentially idiomorphic and idiosyncratic policy landscape. Even though the British colonial education policy has immensely affected the post-colonial education structures and policies in the island, the colonial policy constitutes a distinctive “lending” policy, since Cyprus processed very different characteristics from the other British colonies (Persianis 1996).

Hence, before proceeding to the examination of the ways that asymmetrical relations are evinced within the Cyprus context, it is important to consider some national characteristics that directly or indirectly influence the ways that certain discourses are construed. Inclusive education and the policies that surround it, cannot be understood unless they are placed within a chronological and spatial context, and analysed against the assemblage of political, social, religious, ideological and economic conjunctures.

4.2.1 Colonialism and ethnocentricity

Due to its geo-political position, Cyprus has been historically replete with struggles against foreign invaders who aimed at the “dehellenisation” of the island or in other words, the alienation of the island from Greece. Despite the inimical conditions,

Cypriot people managed to keep, through the years, their Hellenic identity and as a result, they developed strong ethnocentric feelings and attitudes that are prevalent till today. As Mavratsas (2003;81) writes: “ The Greek ethnicism remains the dominant ideology and sentimental power in contemporary Cyprus”. Not surprisingly, then, the Greek-Cypriot Educational reality has been focused so far on the preservation of the ethnic ideals and the Christian Orthodox religion, whilst anything beyond these considerations was regarded as being of secondary importance.

Inevitably, the colonial British lending policy has been immensely influenced by these characteristics and the avid desire of Greek-Cypriots to achieve the enosis (unification with Greece). The dream of “enosis” with mainland Greece mirrored the best possible way the Hellenic feelings of the people in Cyprus as Pantelis (1990;80) writes “...no power in the world, no oppression could alter the national sentiment and will to be annexed to Greece”.

Thus, notwithstanding the pejorative ways Cypriot people were regarded by the colonizers, they did not feel an inferiority complex because they knew that they were descendents of the ancient Greeks whose civilisation pre-existed any other civilization known on earth. What they felt, however, was according to Persianis (1996;48), insecurity in the sense that they were inclined to translate every cultural or educational initiative of the colonial government as an attempt to de-hellenize them. Their sullen insecurity, however, was not unjustifiable since the colonial government explicitly wanted to attenuate, through its social and educational provision, the Hellenic identity of the Greek-Cypriots and impose the “Cypriotisation”, as opposed to the Hellenisation, on the island (Weir 1952; Persianis 1996). As early as in 1933 the new educational legislation confirmed the fact that Britain aimed to centralize and Anglicise the educational system in order to secure its dominant role and to further establish the colonial ethos (Phtiaka1999b), thus indicating “both cultural and political expression of imperialism”(Armstrong 1999b:89). As a consequence of this, Cyprus turned, for historical, national and religious reasons towards the Greek educational system. Thus, even though the Cypriots accepted the British legal, administrative and political institutions they eschewed any proposed curriculum modifications lest they were intended to dehellenize them. Understandably, as Koutselini (1997;398) points out, the moulding forces of educational policy

formulation at the time, emanated from the “‘agonizing struggle’ between Cypriot Hellenism and the ‘foreign government’ ”.

The underdeveloped nature of educational provision of the island during the early years of colonialism can be also attributed to the fact that Cyprus has been mainly an agricultural society and therefore the existing political economy of the island did not allow the rapid change of education policy. Cyprus was regarded as a second class colony due to the fact that it was not a direct route to India and therefore it was initially according to Panteli (1990;94) “occupied rather than administered or developed”.

Given the poor and underdeveloped character of the island, the colonial government regarded as inappropriate the desire of the Greek Cypriots to receive literal and classical education. As a result, the British explicitly promoted the establishment of vocational and agricultural schools, a move that was also expected to relinquish the chauvinistic propaganda carried out through the literal education provided by the Greek schools. The attempts, however, were brought to nought due to the immense “educational zeal” that started to emerge and flourish in the island and the unprecedented desire of the Cypriots to reap the benefits of a Hellenic literal and academic education (Persianis 1996).

In alignment with the above considerations and the negative attitudes of the Cypriot towards vocational training, it is essential to bear in mind the influence of the Ancient Greek conception that emphasized the superiority of theoretical knowledge in relation to the knowledge of practical skills (Maratheftis 1992; Phtiaka 2003). The advocacy to the superiority of the theoretical knowledge is still immensely reflected in the modern Cyprus society and as a corollary to this, the people who are employed in manual/unskilled occupations are assigned an inferior and marginalized social status.

Economics were also a significant factor that was directly related to the control and the pursuant character of the education system. Not only was the church reluctant to cede the control of the education system to the colonial government, but also the colonial government was unwilling to assume the increasing financial burden of education. As a direct consequence, the “ ‘conservative educational ideas’ could thus

continue to thrive” (Persianis;1996;49) whilst the Cyprus church has played a prominent, not to say a leading role, in education matters (Persianis 1996; Koutsellini 1997) during that period, whereby the clergy were both the political and the spiritual leaders (Weir 1952). Not surprisingly, the Archbishopric role is still powerful and influential within all aspects of the society and particularly in education (Maratheftis 1992; Koutselini 1999).

Throughout the periods of both the Turkish (1570-1870) and the British rule (1878-1960), the Orthodox Church had, along with the Greek Board of Education in Cyprus, the absolute control over educational policy. During the early years of the British colonialism, education was “morally and financially supported by the Orthodox Church....and [the schools] were nurseries of Greek nationalism” (Persianis 1996;53). It is interesting here to quote a memorandum sent to His Excellency the Governor in 1935 that makes transparent the attempts of the Locum Tenans to preserve the ascendant role of the Apostolic Church of Cyprus. Thus,

But it is our duty to stress in this memorandum that the Apostolic Church of Cyprus has always been the highest authority responsible for both the secular and ecclesiastical education of the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of the Island. Not only can the Church not renounce the rights and privileges which it acquired long ago, but it also claims the right to negotiate with the Government and to solve, together with the Government, the educational and national problems of its spiritual flock which is not politically free (cited in Weir 1956;101).

The ecclesiastical ascendancy has, thus inevitably reinforced the construction of an education system predicated on the “Greek learning, history and the true and genuine dogmas of the church” (Koutselini and Persianis 2000; 505) The main aim of their schools has been the creation of good Christians and good Greeks whilst the Ancient Greek grammar and Greek History were the main subjects of the curriculum (Weir 1952; Persianis 1996; Koutselini 1997).

The historical reality of the island has led, as Angelides et al (2003;64) contend to a “‘closed’ ethnocentric and nationalistic” and by implication, to a political, social and educational environment impervious to change. Both in Greece and Cyprus the conception of knowledge has been conceived in dogmatic, and ‘sacred’ terms, whilst Polychronopoulos (1989;458) has characterised this kind of knowledge as “static, unhistoric, objective and absolute” (cited in Koutselini and Persianis 2000; 505).

Not surprisingly then, the general dogmatic conception of knowledge is still reflected within the education system, whereby knowledge is interlinked with the syllabus and the prescribed textbooks. There is a particular textbook for every subject that is centrally prescribed by the state. It is inconceivable for a local school or for a teacher to adapt the syllabus or the textbooks to the local circumstances or to particular needs. Interestingly, "... divergence and experimentation are forbidden. The aim is to provide the same knowledge to all, with the same pedagogy and at the same pace" (Demaras 1995;78 cited in Persianis 2003;46). As a result, "classroom dynamics" are occasionally reduced to classrooms rituals, in much the same way as the performance of the mass in the orthodox church is "fixed and sacred" (Koutselini and Persianis 2000;506).

This attests to a recent inference made by a specialist committee, which was assigned to evaluate and make suggestions for the improvement of the education system. In particular the committee characterises the education in Cyprus as:

strictly nationalistic and monolithic and ignores the intra-culturalism and multiculturalism of the Cypriot society as well as the European orientation and globalisation of the Cypriot education (Report of the Committee for the Evaluation of the Cyprus Education System 2004).

Interestingly, one other related characteristic of Cypriot people, which is the direct result of the historical conjunctures and in particular, the more recent Turkish invasion of 1974 and the ensuing political instability, is the feeling of fear. As Mavratsas (2003;87) writes about the daily life in Cyprus:

Let us not forget that the daily routine includes threats...and worries regarding the disturbance of this daily routine. In the case of Cyprus the primary worry it is of-course a new intrusion of the Turkish troops, that they have already occupied the northern part of the island and they are always in belligerence.

This fear is not unjustified if we consider the history of the island and the constant threat that people felt from the foreign intruders who wanted to conquer the island. This fear is accompanied by strong ethnocentric feelings and a narrow-minded mentality. Understandably, these characteristics and the ensuing ideologies are not irrelevant to the ways that people in Cyprus regard difference.

Simultaneously, the Turkish invasion in Cyprus in 1974 along with the past incidents of foreign intruders, not only spread fear among the Cypriot people, but also created huge problems in education. Cyprus, especially after the invasion of 1974, had other priorities in its political agenda and unsurprisingly, was left behind, as far as the education of disabled children is concerned. Suffice here to say that the “politics of recognition” undergirding the struggle for inclusive education policy has been so far superseded by the ethnical version of the “politics of recognition”. What I mean by this is that after the 1974 Turkish invasion on the island and after the 1983 official constitution of the Turkish-Cypriot pseudo state in the occupied area, the main aim of the Greek-Cypriot state has been to ensure, that the Greek-Cypriot state was considered the only legal and recognised state in Cyprus. In this respect, Constantinou and Papadakis (2001;129) write extensively on the prevalence of the “discourse of recognition” that aimed to “ obstruct any normalization of the regime in the north or any possibility of granting recognition to the Turkish-Cypriot state after 1983....”

Evidently, political factors are especially important in constituting the wider picture of educational policymaking. A war can be characterised as the ultimate catastrophic political factor, which adversely affects a socio-political system and creates insurmountable problems. As Closs (2003;147, 151) writes:

The essence of war, in any country, is not that lives are lost and property destroyed, but that the economy, service infrastructures and societal norms are destroyed or collapsed...The devastation of war makes it hard to know how to start the process of rebuilding a country, and its society and what to prioritise.

The prevalence of an ethnic and monological “discourse of recognition” downplayed the necessity to consider the broader dimension of this discourse, which embraces issues that go beyond the reinstatement of Greek-Cypriot peoples’ ethnic and national human rights. Nationalism and cultural conservatism are thus evinced, and simultaneously have profound implications on the ways that the society and the educational system address for example matters of social exclusion, sexism and racism. As far as sexism is concerned, Westering (2000;16) criticizes Cyprus for its discriminatory practices against women. For instance, the following excerpt is indicative of the current position of women in the modern Cypriot society. According

to Westering “ ...women face discrimination that denies them the ability to pass on citizenship to their children if they are married to foreign spouses”(p.16).

These institutional characteristics are also related to the lack of a strong democratic tradition, in an island that has been long bedevilled by colonialism and has been constantly threatened in terms of the national and physical survival of its people (Mavratsas 2003). Cyprus is still struggling to establish and promote basic democratic values that go beyond the nationalistic concerns, which have inevitably monopolized the political scene so far.

Phtiaka (2003;143) writes about the absence of a democratic tradition and the undeveloped public sphere of the island, which, by implication, lacks the potential to beget “ a broader democratic discourse where debates can be held on such rights issues as equal opportunities, or access to education in terms of race, class, gender or disability...” In much the same way, Mavratsas (2003), talks about the lack of citizenship that characterizes Cypriot people. The excessive nationalism undermines the notion of the citizen and the person, and embraces the existence of “ideological monopolies”, something that impedes the development of pluralism and cultural politics, which go beyond the oppressive connotations that the word tolerance might imply (Slee 2003). Halpin (1999;228) writes the following:

The relationship between inclusive schooling and the rebuilding of trust and social capital is then a synergetic one; Each needs not only the other to exist- but also their actual interaction realises an enhanced effect- a revitalization of part of civil society through greater democratic involvement (cited in Closs 2003;152).

Angelides et al (2003), for instance, talk about the “underdeveloped” character of the multi-cultural education ethos in Cyprus, which reflects the intolerance of the society to the “intrusion” of foreign “others” within the education system, and simultaneously, assigns a negative connotation to diversity and difference. This racism is inevitably extended to disabled people who are also regarded as “others”. As Phiaka (2003;147) points out “ Current social attitudes towards disability are the most extreme form of racism prevalent in our society, just as racism- according to Castoriades (1992)- is the most extreme for of rejection of ‘other’ ”. These considerations militate against inclusive education, which is primarily, as Slee

(2001a;386) contends, “a project of cultural politics, as part of the politics of identity, difference and representation (Young 1990; Fraser 1995) as they are played out in the social relations of schooling”.

In addition to the above considerations, it is worth noting that the ecclesiastical influence is not limited to the construction and preservation of a restricted and unassailable knowledge, but extends to the construction of a powerful and penetrating charity discourse, which directly affects the pursuit of an inclusive education system, based on a human rights discourse. The charity discourse that permeates special education (Tomlinson 1982; Drake 1996) finds a resonance with the values of the Christian orthodox religion that preaches compassion and charity. Prominent figures within the Cyprus society find their engagement in charitable events, for disabled bodies and minds, as the vehicle for the promotion of their public image as philanthropists and good Christians (Phtiaka 1999, 2003). As it will be discussed later, disabled people are viewed as objects of pity whereby power is evasively and corrosively imposed on them, thus leading to their disempowerment and exclusion.

This kind of charity discourse, far from facilitating the Christian principle of equality, paradoxically gives rise to the dominance of “elitist models”, whereby disabled people are significantly manipulated by certain “elites” that, are institutionalised enabled to “amass and concentrate power” (Phtiaka 2003;147), to the detriment of disabled people’s autonomy and recognition of citizenship (Barton 1993).

4.2.2 The late years of colonialism; The emergence of utilitarianism

During the late years of colonialism in Cyprus, the British felt that they had considerably failed to enhance their political control over Cyprus and moreover, they felt that their “civilised role” has been neither understood nor appreciated by the colonised (Persianis 1996;56). Simultaneously, it became even more evident that the links that Cypriots had with Greece encumbered the attempts of the colonials to ensure their cultural and political sovereign role as it happened in the other colonies.

As a result, the colonial government intensified its attempts to cultivate amongst Cypriots the conception of being members of the British Empire.

This could have been better achieved if the colonial government touched upon the “educational zeal” of the Cypriots and provided an attractive alternative to the educational opportunities offered in the Greek schools and subsequently, in the Greek universities. It is clearly evident that the British attempted to use “education as a means of cultural integration” (Persianis 1996;56). As a result, the colonial government introduced new concepts of education and new patterns of schooling that even though their initial aim was the “Cypriotisation” of the population they had a beneficial impact on the post-colonial structures and policies of the island.

Among the new measures, the colonial government encouraged the study of Cypriots in British universities through the allotment of various scholarships. The study was mainly in fields like economics, public and business administration, commerce, accountancy and modern technology. The graduates were thereafter assigned a high status due to their considerable political and social success upon their return in Cyprus. This worked as an antidote to the tendency of Cypriots to study in the Greek universities and established the importance of those study fields, whilst simultaneously established according to Persianis (1996;59) “ a utilitarian outlook on life that has survived until today”.

The prevalent utilitarian spirit instigated the rapid development of the island. When Cyprus became an independent state in 1960 it already possessed the human and technical capital to proceed to modernisation. This was especially true after the debilitating Turkish invasion of 1974. The utilitarian spirit was responsible for the relatively rapid and enviable economic and social restoration of the island, whereby admittedly, Cypriots “owe a lot to the British lending policy”(Persianis 1996;61).

Having already the expertise and the entrepreneurial spirit, the attempts of the state and the people in general, focused on the economic, social and political restoration of the nation. Considering the limited natural resources of the nation (Persianis 2000), education was the only vehicle through which Cyprus could invest for the future, in order to achieve its political, social and economic ends, after the devastating

consequences of 1974 invasion. The phenomenon of the “educational zeal”, evinced during the British colonialism, continued to thrive and as Persianis (1996;56) writes: “Education was now seen as an agent of social amelioration and as deserving high priority”. This is especially true for a nation which is characterised as a classless society, whereby education and in particular higher education, is considered as a means of “social mobility” (Persianis 2000;38).

In consequence, a highly competitive education system has been created which, despite its immense contribution to the islands’ current laudable levels of prosperity, has simultaneously created a utilitarian and materialistic society, characterised by wealth and over-consumerism (Persianis 1996; Marmara 1996). Inevitably, a Capitalist Economic System is ascendant and has reached its apex, as the market forces are variously affecting education policies. This phenomenon, even though not unknown in the UK and other Western countries, supplemented by the pervasive discourse of Meritocracy and Competitiveness (Phtiaka 2003), finds its distinct place within the mosaic of discourses that underlie and distinguish the Cyprus education system.

Another characteristic of the Cyprus state, interrelated to the emergence and consolidation of a rather competitive education system, is as Persianis (2000;39) writes, whilst recounting the reasons for the creation of the University of Cyprus, the “great state legitimacy deficits”, that is the failure of the state to instil credibility and acceptability among its citizens (Weiler 1983). This phenomenon, unlike other states, is exacerbated by the idiosyncratic conditions under which the independent state of Cyprus has been constituted on 16th August 1960. Under the imposition of the three guarantor powers; UK, Greece and Turkey, Cyprus has been declared, according to the constitution, as an independent two-ethnic community nation-state. The three “guarantor” powers were automatically allotted the legal right to interfere in the internal affairs of the state and intervene in need for the restoration of the status quo. Simultaneously, they were given the right to maintain their troops on the island and ensure their military sovereignty on the island. As Constantinou and Papadakis (2001;127) write regarding the idiomorphic conditions under which the independent state of Cyprus has been constituted:

The Republic of Cyprus came into being with only limited sovereignty, the only truly “international state”, a strange mixture of a protectorate, condominium, and independent statehood.

The idiomorphic constitution of the island, the existence of an unchangeable constitution coupled with the Turkish invasion of 1974 in the island, and the failure of the government to achieve a viable solution of the so-called “Cyprus problem”, exacerbated the “state legitimacy deficits”. In effect, the Cyprus state sought “compensatory” legitimation through education, something that has been further supplemented, as Persianis (2000;38) contends, by the psychology of a small state according to which “the intellectual arena” is regarded as the only arena that a small nation can compete on an equal basis with rich and powerful nations.

Bearing in mind the above considerations, it is evident that the case of Cyprus, notwithstanding the politics of policy borrowing, can be placed on distinct bedrock against which the “politics of discourse” and the asymmetrical power relations immanent in them should be analysed. Firstly then, it is important to examine how unequal power relations are evinced within the current legislation and how these relations multifariously affect the physical and discursive “spatial shifting” (Armstrong 2003; 26) of disabled students. Of equal importance and interest would also be to examine how these unequal power relations are evinced within the Cyprus society in general.

It should be noted, however, that beyond the local-bound considerations, we should not underestimate the supranational contemporary influences and phenomena that directly affect the formation of Cyprus education policy. There is no denying that the tenets of the European Union, and other international organizations along with the phenomenon of globalisation, tilt the balance away to a cross-cultural perspective, which suggests a certain degree of homogeneity in education policy among the different countries.

Before, however, proceeding to a more cross-cultural perspective, it is important to refer to the ways that the idiomorphic local circumstances will be shaped under the impact of globalisation. Put differently, it is important to engage with the dialectic of

the global, the national and the local (Crossley and Watson 2003) in investigating social and educational policy and provision. As Dale (1999;4-5) so cogently puts it:

Globalisation may change the parameters and direction of state policies in similar ways but it does not inevitably override or remove existing national peculiarities (or different sectoral peculiarities within national societies).

So much so, that globalisation is by no means expected to undermine the role of comparative research in education or elsewhere. Rather it will spawn fresh perspectives to engage with and will necessitate the utilization of a different methodological approach (Dale 2000) capable, among other things, of identifying what Ochs and Phillips (2004) call the “filters” that are at work in the policy borrowing process.

4.3 The dialectic of the global and the local; the case of Cyprus

The European Union can be actually characterised as a sub-product of globalisation and Cyprus, as a member of the European community, is directly influenced by the new state of affairs. The current political situation of Cyprus and the persistence of the so-called “Cyprus problem” to remain unresolved for more than thirty years render the European Union as the only hope for political stability and a viable solution of the Cyprus problem. Simultaneously, the accession of the island to the Community is expected to disperse the prolonged fear of the Greek Cypriots over their physical and national survival that bedevilled them through the centuries. As we read in the information booklet prepared by the Press and Information Office of Cyprus:

Membership of the European Union will provide the most suitable environment for a fair and lasting settlement in the island as it will give both Greek and Turkish Cypriots a sense of security and safeguard their fundamental human rights within the framework of the *acquis communautaire* which each member-state must adhere to (P.I.O 2003;23).

The tenets of globalisation that are also espoused by the E.U rest upon the creation of a multiethnic community central to which is the right to be different. The new state of affairs has already started to bear a major impact on the national educational policymaking agenda. As early as in 1984, the Special programme no.8 of the

European Committee, where Cyprus participated, stipulated among the other aims of the primary schools, the necessity to “ help children to acquire the values of democracy, tolerance, participation, responsibility, respect for the rights of others...” (cited in Maratheftis 1992;65). The cultivation of these values has already started to constitute an important parameter of special educational policy and provision in Cyprus, at least at rhetorical levels. This is a first step towards respecting diversity, on whatever terms this is defined, and accepting it as a means for contributing to the global welfare.

From this perspective, the myth of the independency of nations is challenged in much the same way as the myth of the independency of individuals is. Paradoxically, however, the myth of the existence of competent individuals who would be given the incentives to flourish within a liberating socio-political and educational context has ascended. In this respect, concerns for social justice and equity are increasingly superseded by market driven considerations. Prominence is given to the market driven notions of competitiveness and the necessity to incorporate within the economic, political and educational policies the notions of efficiency, effectiveness and quality. Resources are directed to those who are deemed productive and competent individuals and they shift away from students diagnosed as having “special needs” (Apple 2001).

Especially in a country like Cyprus where Human Capital is the most important factor for production (P.I.O 175/2003), these new policy imperatives are considered crucial if the island is to fulfil the demands of a competitive global economy. Simultaneously, given the idiomorphic conditions of the island and the underdeveloped political ethos of the Cypriots, the market-driven spirit of competitiveness encouraged by globalisation, is expected to have a more profound and hence, a more negative impact on the already utilitarian and materialist outlook of the “uncivil”, as earlier discussed, Cyprus society. Given the historical reality and excessive nationalism of Cyprus, Mavratsas (2003) talks extensively about the “atrophy” of the Cypriot society and the cultural and material incommensurate development of the island that distinguishes it from the other European nations. It is interesting to quote the following:

It is due to this cultural underdevelopment that the Greek-Cypriot society often appears with a face that leads to the Third World (with which the Greek-Cypriots consider that have no relation), rather than the European Union....And given the economic development of the Greek-Cypriot society, (a development that, should be stressed, has been achieved in the absence of a contemporary economic ethos), somebody could be justifiably talk about a disproportionate cultural and material development (Mavratsas 2003;134) [my translation].

The pressures and the demands of a global system are likely to exacerbate the abovementioned concerns regarding the disproportionate cultural and economic development of the country, something that will probably further level down the cultural, social and political ethos of the island. The increased concern for efficiency and productivity supersede essential matters related to values, justice and constitute pervasive technologies of power that in consequence might have a corrosive effect on the institutional, cultural and social edifice of the country.

Understandably, the phenomenon of globalisation and the tenets of European Union (E.U) instigate distinct local responses (Crossley and Watson 2003) and pose contradictory considerations and dilemmas to the educational policymakers of the various countries. This is especially true for Cyprus with its idiomorphic and intricately complex historical, political and social realities. The concerns emanating from the competitive global economy are mirrored and constitute great paradoxes within inclusive education policies that even though they envision a more equal and just society, they concomitantly perpetuate the status quo and the unequal power relations that work to the detriment of disabled children and their advocates. What thrives, under the current conditions, is a model of inclusive education that as Armstrong (2005;136) writes, allows “ the creation of the special education industry under the banner of inclusion.”

4.4 Disabled children and asymmetrical power relations within legislation

As it has been previously discussed, the legislative politics constitute a crucial part of the “wider picture” of Education policy analysis as they provide the discursive frame within which the policy struggles and conflicts are pursued. As Armstrong (1999; 81) contends:

Legislation has an essential legitimating role in the repartition of social and cultural space in education systems. It is a political mechanism through which exclusion is ordered.

The language underpinning legislative documents is pervasive and powerful, not only in terms of nomenclature or description but also in terms of the ways that things are either said, not said, or implied. Power surfaces discursively and evasively within policy documents and it is masked under pious rhetorical considerations informed by the concept of inclusion. It is therefore, essential to expose the ways that “texts work to create inequalities of power” (Mills 1997;134).

Cyprus is characterised by a highly centralised education system (Phtiaka 1999a; Koutselini and Persianis 2000), and therefore pre-eminent emphasis should be given to the asymmetrical power relations that are evinced within the assemble of official discourses or within the “public face of policy” (Armstrong 2003;46), either in terms of legislation or provision. The public face of policy is reflected in the official legislation and other documents and circulars sent to schools, along with the minutes of the parliament that steer governmental policy and provision. These asymmetrical power relations are inevitably relayed within all the arenas of the educational system whilst simultaneously reflect aspects of Cyprus society more generally that seems, for many reasons, to encourage the displacement of disabled people to the margins, as unfortunate and subordinate human creatures or even worse, as less than human entities.

The genealogical analysis pursued in the previous section brought to the surface the constellation of obscured and surreptitious political and historical dynamics that have evasively, albeit poignantly, impacted on the formation of the variegated discursive barriers that have contributed towards subverting the road towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse. The “discursive multicipility” (Taylor 2004;433) evinced in official rhetoric and the current legislation, is precisely, the result of the profusion of these dynamics that have a profound moulding effect on the discourses influencing key policymakers “will to truth” regarding integration issues. In the following lines the attempt is to adumbrate the current special education “policyscape” within the Cyprus context. In so doing, it will be possible to make transparent key aspects of the diverse and contradictory discursive assemble undergridding the current special education policy framework. It needs noting that this would be a rudimentary attempt aimed at merely providing glimpses on the current policy framework. A more

substantial and integrated endeavour towards this direction would be assumed in the documentary analysis chapter that will follow.

The current official position of the government is geared towards the promotion and preservation of a child-centred society, something that is reflected in the consistent attempts of the government to align legislation, policies and other programmes with international Conventions about children's rights. The Representative of Cyprus to the 3rd Committee of the United Nations for the Promotion and Protection of Rights of Children (1999) notes the fact that "Children's protection has been and continues to constitute a priority for the government". In this respect, he refers to the government "Plan of Action for Children" that aims to incorporate within the education system the values and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to make children aware of their rights. The Programme also sought to give voice to children by enabling their active participation in decision-making processes directly related to them. As far as the field of education is concerned, emphasis, according to the contemporary international trends, is placed on Special Education and the integration, as it is written, of children with special needs into the mainstream system.

The latest legislation in Cyprus is the 1999 Special Education Act (N.113/1) for the education of children with special needs. The Act is supposed to represent a radical shift from the first Act published in 1979, since it gives, for the first time, the legal right to disabled children to be educated in their neighbourhood mainstream school. It needs noting that the word integration did not appear in any official documents of the Ministry until 1988, whilst it was legally backed up as late as in 1999.

It is obvious that the new Law is immensely influenced by the British educational philosophy and legislation traced in the late 1970's and in the early 1980's (The Warnock report of 1978 and the education Act 1981) (Phtiaka 1999b). The Constantinides Report (1992) in parallel with Warnock report (1978), introduced the notion of integration of disabled children within mainstream schools and simultaneously, adopted a critical stance towards the existing legislation of 1979 (N.47/1979) (Phtiaka 2001a). The overarching influence of the U.K legislation and practice is not surprising given its long-term colonization over Cyprus. Suffice here to say that Britain colonised Cyprus till its independence in 1960 and as Phtiaka

(2001c;1) eloquently points out it “has long entertained a position of military (1878-1960) and intellectual (1878-?) influence over Cyprus”.

The new legislation has been mainly the result of the coordinating efforts of disabled organizations, parental groups and certain educational officials, which along with the influential role of international trends innovated major changes, which were gestating some years before (Phtiaka 2000). The new powerful discourses of integration and later inclusion impacted on the ways that special education has been conceptualised and represented within policy documents so far. Understandably, the changes achieved vindicate the dynamic and transformative role of agents and their potential to overcome the absolutistic and confining considerations of structuralism.

Notwithstanding, however, the important role of agents, the struggle for ascendancy is intense and fraught with resistance. Foucault (1982;208) gives prominence to the ways that “human beings are made subjects” (cited in Kendal and Wickham 1999;51) through the overarching and subjugating influence of discourse. Structuralism, in this sense, pervades the social and cultural edifice in polymorphous ways, thereby creating and sustaining unequal power relations and damaging binarisms. Special educational thinking imperatives entrenched in people’s consciousness and institutions are difficult to relinquish, given their persistent nature and their socially and culturally legitimated status.

4.5 Inclusive education policy; A disassembling critique

On the face of it, it seems that the government is zealously concerned with the promotion of children’s rights and especially their educational rights. It is then, pertinent to ask to what extent this concern includes disabled children’s rights. What kind of legislation underpins special education? To what extent is the legislation predicated on a human rights discourse? Can the legislation be characterised as a child-centred legislation in the same way as the policy of the state about children’s rights proclaims to be?

The government prides itself on having signed all the international conventions for the protection, care, education and employment of disabled people. It also claims that it

has successfully completed almost all the related covenants aimed at the accession of Cyprus in the EU, and that it has accomplished one of the most progressive legislative programmes in Europe. How far do these assertions represent reality rather than laudable rhetoric?

There is no denying that the professed policy of the government as declared in a United Nation's committee (1999;2) represents an assemble of bold and praiseworthy statements which are summarised as follows

The aforesaid policy based on the principle of equalization of opportunities which aims mainly at the removal of physical and social barriers, the elimination of discrimination and the introduction of positive measures in the field in favour of people with disabilities.

Especially, as far as education is concerned, the Ministry of Education and Culture (1994;17) is explicit when stating that:

The general aim of the Greek Cypriot education is the creation of free, democratic and self-sufficient citizens with a fully developed personality.

and

(Education) is offered equally to all children of the Greek schools of the Republic of Cyprus, according to the Constitution.

Whilst, more recently in the Education For All Report (2000;15), it is stated that

The educational plan of action in Cyprus has also dealt with the identification of particular target groups. As a result, there has been special concern for the education of children with special needs...

Simultaneously, within the same Report (p.14) it is emphatically pointed out that

In a continuously changing world, the aims of Primary Education are the wholistic development of the child's promotion of positive attitudes towards learning, mutual understanding and tolerance, and respect of civilization and culture, human rights and the humanistic ideals of freedom, democracy and justice.

Notwithstanding, however, the imposing rhetoric, practice suggests an antithetical state of affairs, whereby disabled people and children are systematically ignored and treated as second-class citizens (Phtiaka 2002; Angelides 2004). The government remains indifferent and unwilling to challenge the status quo, to empower disabled

people and ultimately, to facilitate educational change. It is well documented that although disabled children are integrated within mainstream settings, they are constantly excluded and marginalized at the periphery of the education system, whilst the situation does not seem to improve in any way (Angelides and Zembylas 2002; Phtiaka 2002).

Ample evidence makes apparent the “attenuated” attempts of the government, even to rhetorically convey, through its educational documents and its official legislation, the necessity to re-construct the education system and place the axioms of an inclusive discourse on a high-priority agenda (Phtiaka 2002; Angelides 2004). It also seems that most of the initiatives undertaken on behalf of the government to amend its policies, emanate from the pressures of trans-national imperatives (like the ones proclaimed by the European Union), and obviously not from an indigenous political “sensitisation”. That is the reason why some of these initiatives, including the creation of an inclusive education system, are weakly and contradictory articulated within the different governmental documents.

For instance, the official web page of the Cyprus Government states the following regarding the current Special Education Law:

The Lawis the legislative framework which regulates the detection of children with special educational needs; their assessment and the development of an individualized educational programme; their placement in the most appropriate educational setting with provision of both teachers and educational resources to meet their needs; and for the ongoing evaluation of their progress (Cyprus Government 2006).

Even though the new Law is purportedly an integrative Law, what is merely conveyed through the official website of the Ministry is the necessity for the identification of the children with special needs and their placement in “ the most appropriate setting”. This is nothing but a “pull out” clause in the sense that integration is contingent upon the “appropriateness” of placement, thereby insinuating and statutorily granting the possibility for segregating placement, if considered appropriate.

Moreover, the same official website adumbrates the recent policy planning of Cyprus. As we read:

Recent policy planning has given priority to new key tasks the main areas of which are:

- Enhancement of foreign language learning
- Establishment of special rooms, especially Language Rooms
- Upgrading of school libraries
- The appointment of classroom Teacher Coordinators
- The full implementation of information and communication Technology
- Education for pupils with special needs
- Special programmes such as sex education, health and environment issues. (Cyprus Government 2006)

Interestingly, the upgrading of school libraries precedes the policy concerns over the education for pupils with special needs. Whilst Cyprus is at a critical initial stage in the implementation of the 1999 Special Education Law, the concerns over the education of disabled children are equated or are, more precisely, superseded by technical concerns that one would have not expected them to be included in the core of current policy planning. It is my contention, that concerns like the establishment of language rooms and the upgrading of school libraries do not constitute crucial issues of educational policymaking, as they are merely rest upon technicalities. Within such a diverse scope of policy initiatives we can easily infer the unimportance attributed to the new legislative framework regarding the integration of disabled children in mainstream settings.

Another interesting example is to examine an educational document that is sent to primary and secondary schools, and contains the educational goals under emphasis for the school year 2003-2004. The main part, if not almost all the document, refers to the unofficial accession of Cyprus in the European Union (16th April 2003) and the educational challenges that its European orientation would entail. The document lists some of the challenges that Cyprus should consider. The challenges are placed in order, something that usually indicates priority. It is striking the fact that some of the challenges placed first are imbued by the “neo-liberal discourse”, whilst the “concern for children with special needs” is placed last. In particular, the following quotation presents the educational priorities in exactly the same order as they appear in the document (Ministry of Education and Culture 2003;.2-translation from Greek)

- Educational restructuring and promotion of internet use
- Emphasis on scientific research
- Increase of productivity
- Promotion of new services
- Emphasis on cultural enhancement
- Real equality between men and women
- Concern for children with special educational needs.

Not only is the concern for disabled children placed last, but it is also imbued by a deficit discourse, in the sense that a “special needs” category of children is construed. The concern for the children is constricted to their attribute as special needs children and is not explicitly interlinked to the necessity to provide effective education for all within an inclusive education system. The individualistic gaze concentrates on the necessity to tackle the children’s “special education needs” whereas issues of schooling are silenced and remained unexamined. The concern for disabled children is not only placed at the bottom of the priority agenda, but also no further explanations or clarifications are provided about the last and in this case, indeed the least educational goal.

Of considerable interest, is also the introduction of the neo-liberal discourse in Cypriot education that is more apparent in the paragraph that is immediately after, and reads as follows: “ **The strategic aim for Europe.....is, until 2010 the European Union, ...to become the most competitive and dynamic economy, capable of ensuring continuous development....**” (emphasis in the original). The powerful market driven discourse of efficiency permeates the concerns for educational policy and provision. It is believed that by applying the entrepreneur and competitive spirit of the free market it will enhance the effectiveness of the education system and the competitiveness of the state in the global market place. Inevitably, the concerns for a democratic and equitable education are sidestepped as they are blamed for levelling down educational standards (Barton 1999). Of considerable interest is also a report prepared by a Committee assigned to evaluate the education system and make suggestions for its improvement. The Committee is explicit on the necessity to come to terms with the demands of the E.U. and produce the necessary human capital that is arguably the single vital input to the economic, social and individual welfare of a nation state (Report of the Committee for the Educational Reform 2004).

Another circular sent to schools on 19th October 2005, is again concerned with the main goal of the 2005-06 school year. The main goal is concerned with “Transportation Education” and states the means that the goal can be promoted within schools. The education of special needs children and the attempts for the realisation of an inclusive discourse has never constituted the main goal under emphasis. Arguably,

despite the existence of the special educational Law that along other circulars is disseminated in schools, an emphasis on inclusive education would have been a way to explicate the Law and provide the means and the impetus for its explication and subsequent successful implementation. Angelides (2004) is explicit on the failure of inclusive education policy in Cyprus something that can be partly attributed to the fact that the philosophy of the Law is misunderstood or even not understood at all, precisely because no due attention has been given towards this end. As he points out:

The new law was sent to schools but very few people took the time to read it since the text is written in legalese language and it was difficult for teachers to make sense of it...The whole policy of the MEC [Ministry of Education and Culture] on implementing inclusive education seems to have failed, therefore, it has to be restructured (Angelides 2004; 441, 417).

Having said this, it is apparent that the legislative changes achieved so far are largely spasmodic and sporadic. The government, whilst extolling its legislative “achievements”, remains resistant to the voices of disabled people and their advocates, for a thorough change of asymmetrical power relations. Key policymakers within the MEC convey, through the legislative and other official documents sent to schools, a contradictory philosophy regarding the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Reiterating Angelides (2004:419) once more, “ The people who hold high positions in the administration of MEC are not qualified enough for implementing inclusive education and they carry traditional ideas, stunting inclusive education.”

The ambivalence of the government is primarily evinced within its legislation, which is contradictory, ambiguous and self-deceptive. Laudable rhetoric espousing the precepts of inclusion is contradicted by statements, which reflect and concomitantly disseminate the erroneous or at best, the muddled philosophy that prevails around inclusion (Liasidou 2002). A striking example is that a considerable part of the new supposedly more inclusive Law, is concerned with the creation and function of special schools! Inclusion is provisional and contingent on a panoply of factors that have little to do with the real needs of the children and the genuine concern of the government to render inclusion a feasible and achievable goal.

If one delves deeper into certain governmental documents, it becomes far from evident that inclusion is misconceived and misinterpreted, whilst the paraphernalia of

special education thinking still thrives. The notion of inclusion is occasionally reduced to the creation of resource units within mainstream settings, whilst the word inclusion is used interchangeably with integration. For instance, an excerpt from an official document of special education reads as following:

The 1999 Special Education Law demands that new special schools must be built within the boundaries of a mainstream school to facilitate constant networking and where possible integration/inclusion (Working Document-Eurydice2002).

It would be logical then for somebody to wonder; is that what we mean by inclusion and are inclusion and integration synonymous? How can we expect an inclusive practice when the Law or even the interpretation of the Law is predicated on erroneous and misleading grounds? When we compromise the concern for inclusion by providing alternatives and semi-measures then the realisation of an inclusive discourse is put in jeopardy.

Thus, despite the exhilarating rhetorical shift, the Law and the interpretations of it, are still influenced by unequal power relations, as the placing of disabled children in mainstream settings, far from being a matter of entitlement, is contingent on factors emanating from power relations. Even the existence of a separate education Act, which specifically refers to disabled children, is by-itself a striking evidence of the discretionary power assigned to policy makers to construe the “special needs” category of children and perpetuate the dual system of educational administration and provision. It is quite obvious that the Act is fraught with discourses that disempower disabled children. A selective approach to these discourses will be attempted, in order to denote the extent to which unequal power relations construe “disability” and “deficit”. A more comprehensive analysis of the current document, will be, however, attempted in the documentary analysis section that will follow.

4.6 The new legislation; The illusion of progress.

The 1999 Act states the responsibility of the government to provide opportunities for education and guidance to disabled children. The preamble is characterized with statements imbued by an inclusive philosophy as they envision the creation of the “least restrictive environment” through the reinstatement of disabled children’s

human rights. Even though the statements would have been praiseworthy, the repetitive reference to the “rehabilitation” of the children insinuates their difference and the need to be subjected to a normalizing process. This is the linguistic prelude to a profusion of “linguistic minefields” that provide the contradictory and contentious nature of the supposedly inclusive legislative document.

The next section of the Law is given over to the definition of the core phraseology employed within the document. Reference is made to the “special unit” that is defined as a “ unit that functions in a mainstream school to provide special education according to the specifications of the present Law”(article 2.1). Relatedly, another excerpt from the supposedly inclusive Law reads as follows:

The attendance of a child with special educational needs in special units or in a special school or elsewhere is forbidden unless the extent and the length of the attendance is decided according to the stipulations of the Law (article 4).

Paradoxically, a supposedly inclusive education Law includes stipulations that refer to special units and their function. On the contrary, nowhere are there any definitions relating to inclusion and a detailed analysis of the precepts upon which the avowed by the Law kind of inclusion is predicated. What is evident from the excerpt is that the Law advocates a conditional and contingent kind of inclusion, in the sense that the placement of a disabled child in mainstream classrooms rests upon the discretionary power of the professionals. The Law, thus, gives professionals “plenty of space to manoeuvre” (Slee 2001a;389), thereby exerting their power in unobtrusive and legitimate ways. In addition, almost half of the document gives extended consideration to the presuppositions for the function of special schools. Rather than focusing on the function of mainstream schools for the realisation of an inclusive discourse, the document digresses and shifts backwards to the antiquated special education discourse and the function of special schools.

Another interesting quote, which declares the provisional nature of inclusion and the disempowerment of disabled children and their advocates, is the following:

..in cases where it is judged that it is necessary to provide special education or part of it, in a place other than the mainstream classroom, it is stipulated whether and to what extent special education and education should be provided in special units or elsewhere... (article 12.2c).

The document makes explicit its advocacy to the existence of two kinds of education and testifies in the best possible way its support for a two-tier system of education. So much so is the document concerned with the possible placement of disabled children in special schools that it elaborates on the issue, and gives further details on the relevant procedures for the accomplishment of the abovementioned considerations. Thus,

in case that the attention in a neighbourhood special school is not possible, the Regional Committee cares for the free transportation of the child to and from the [special] school (article 12.2.c).

Interestingly, the well known precepts of inclusion according to which, each child, whatsoever her needs might be, should be educated in her neighbourhood school, is paraphrased, or put bluntly, are “linguistically manipulated” in order to be in alignment with the attempts to maintain and perpetuate the existence of a segregating educational system.

Moreover, the bulk of the Law refers in detail to the “identification and assessment” procedures of special education needs children. Obviously, the emphasis is placed on the medical rather than the educational dimensions of integrative attempts, whereby the extent of children’s deficiency is assessed and the multi-disciplinary team prepares a relevant report whereby children might have to be “trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded etc” (Foucault 1977;191). The emphasis given on these reports endorses children’s differences and sidesteps the right of these children to participate, on equal terms with their peers, in a democratic and hence, an inclusive curriculum. It is evident that the Law does not express an unambiguous and unconditional commitment to an inclusive discourse. The political elasticity of language (Slee 1996) plays a crucial role in the maintenance of power relations and the concomitant constitution of the precarious bases of an inclusive discourse.

Similar things can be also said about the document that is concerned with the Regulations of the Law. (K.Π.Δ 186/2001) The Regulations, for instance, start with reference to the Regional Committee, which is authorized to:

decide after assessment, according to the potential of article 12 of the Act, whether the child is deemed to need special education. In case where the allocation of such education is decided, the details of this education should be defined (Part II, 2 (5) b).

Evidently, a deficit perspective is again adopted, whereby the Committee should define the extent of children's "deficiency" and decide the kind of special education (if not treatment) the child should receive through "the natural activity of assessment". Assessment is thus implicated within asymmetrical power relations whereby the "assessors" are entitled to exert their discretionary power in "disguise" (Withers and Lee 1988;175) and impose unobtrusively their own "will to truth", which according to Foucault is already a "will to power" (cited in Merquior 1985;108). The assessors through their own conceptualisations of "normality" are responsible to define the extent to which a child deviates from their preordained notion of normality, something that undoubtedly constitutes an exercise of power. Moreover, in terms of nomenclature, they are the ones who can "define" the characteristics after which the child can be labelled, as either dyslexic, autistic or learning disabled. The label attached to the child predisposes its future development trajectory and its future status within the education, and by extension within the society. As a result, professionals are legitimately assigned a higher status than disabled children, whose future is contingent to their subjective and authoritarian judgement. Reiterating Barnes (1994;208), "professional intervention undermines disabled people's ability to control their own life".

Thus immediately after probing the document, the discursive framework of unequal power relations, within which the Act will be circumscribed, emerges. The focus of the inquiry is placed upon the identification and "calibration" of children's deficits according to professional's culturally constructed notion of normality. Reiterating Slee's (2001a;386) words:

Disability is seen to be a condition of the defective individual, rather than a signifier of more complex sets of relationships between institutions and individuals. [In this respect] policy has become the instrument through which knowledgeable experts manage the lives of disabled people (ibid;389).

Simultaneously, parents endorse their powerlessness as they recognise the institutionally endowed expertise of professionals. Recognition and passive submission accentuates a circle of domination-subordination and concomitantly, the

evasive imposition of power becomes naturalised and legitimised through parental consent. Foucault is especially concerned with the discreet imposition of power. Despite the progress that the various institutions under scrutiny have been allegedly made during the 20th century, Foucault emphasizes the ways that surveillance is inconspicuously and incessantly undergirding the functioning of these institutions (Foucault 1977).

For instance, The Regulations of the Act refer to the confidential archives that the committee should prepare for the children. The parents of the children can have access to the archives, without however being able to obtain a copy of them. Understandably, parents' rights are immediately infringed, as parents are placed in an institutionally legitimised subordinate position as they are institutionally prohibited to have the reports of their children examined/studied by an independent professional or a group of professionals from the private sector. By no means can the monological and authoritative judgement of the governmental mechanisms responsible to safeguard the official discourse, be challenged or questioned.

Another theme in the Act, is the reference to the bureaucratic procedures that underlie the work of the Committee, which is again a legitimised means, which aims at the mystification of power relations. Presumably, parents feel bewildered and unable to intervene in all these institutionally sanctioned procedures, and inevitably surrender to their role as passive receptacles of the assemblage of bureaucratic rules and actions. Throughout the document the same themes of deficit, professionalism and bureaucracy are repeatedly espoused, within, however, different but interrelated contexts.

It is clearly evident that policy documents oscillate between competing and antithetical discourses. Thus in spite of the "cosmetic linguistic surgery" (Slee 1993;353) that the latest policy documents have undergone, it is palpable that antiquated discourses of special education are still present. The medical "gaze" of individual pathology has not only not ceased to exist, but it has been accorded an enhanced status and credibility in its ability to normalise the "defects". Inevitably, the legislative attempts aiming at the quest of an inclusive discourse are jeopardised.

4.7 Asymmetrical power relations within the Cyprus society

Policy scholarship seeks to examine the wider framework within which education policy is conceptualised and implemented. Simultaneously, it seeks to bring to the surface the “political regime of the production of truth” (Foucault 1977;185) undergirding special education policy constitution and dissemination. Admittedly, the role of power and its interrelation with the ideological and political infrastructure of the wider society is crucial in policy formulation and implementation and therefore, it needs critical consideration and examination. Beyond the historical considerations that affect policy formulation, the contemporary state of affairs within a given society along with the asymmetrical power relations that are evinced within it, play a pivotal role in the ways that inclusive education policy is conceptualised and shaped.

Maratheftis (1992;118) whilst writing about “The political reality of the contemporary Cypriot society and its impact on education”, points out the fact that even though the

‘school education’ is steered by the government, it is directly affected by “paideia” (a Greek word that denotes an extended meaning of the word education- “ekpaideusi”) , which is offered by the wider society; the civilization, the principles that are cultivated, the activities of the political parties, and the ethos of the political leaders. The influence of ‘paideia’ is by far bigger than people might expect. Frequently, ‘paideia’ can destroy what school education might create (translation from Greek).

Beyond the public face of policy, lies the other face of policy, which is constituted by equally significant and even more pervasive discourses, directly related to the “paideia” of a given society, which is formulated by the accumulation of historical, ideological and other contemporary conjunctures. As Humphrey (2000;73) poignantly puts it, “ the institutional edifice and cultural soil of a given society has a much longer history than anyone born into that society and that it will outweigh the effort of any given group to change that society...”

Prejudice and discrimination construe the hegemonic discourse around disability issues, which becomes entrenched in people’s consciousness and evasively gets legitimated within the institutional infrastructure of a given socio-political system.

The power inherent in the construed discourse makes difficult the emergence and sovereignty of alternative discourses and in consequence, the status quo of special education imperatives is difficult to dismantle and remove. Heward and Lloyd-Smith (1990;29) point out the alarming fact that categorization and segregation are “strongly institutionalised and supported in the wider society outside education”.

Having said this, it follows that any attempts at change should extend beyond the governmental terrain, and should be oriented towards the “paideia” of the whole society. This makes imperative the investigation of the ways that “...dominant groups either ideologically disparage or ruthlessly deny the humanity of the Other” (Giroux 1992;33 cited in Barton 1993;242). How then, is “paideia” in the Cyprus context related to disability? What powerful discourses inform the national “paideia”, and in what ways do they affect inclusive education policies?

The charity model of disability is well entrenched in Cypriot people’s consciousness since charity is regarded not only as a humanitarian activity but also as a religious one. Within the capitalist system of intense competition and materialism, disabled people are considered as unfortunate creatures who need constant protection and help, in order to “survive” the harsh realities of life. They are also perceived as having nothing to contribute to the competitive and entrepreneur milieu of the Cyprus society and they are, thus, labelled as subordinate and less than human beings. In consequence, non-disabled people feel that they ought to “give” them, through charity, something from their prosperous able-bodied world, which otherwise they cannot get.

Disabled people’s human demotion is best “celebrated” during the national charity fiesta of Radiomarathon whereby the notions of power, control and vested interests are central. Radiomarathon is a private initiative and aims to evoke the sentiments of compassion and pity of fellow people and raise money for disabled people. The leaflet disseminated for the support of the charity event calls everyone to “ understand the problems and frustrations children with special needs feel”. The evocation for sympathy, however, is as Rioux (1993;516) so succinctly puts it “apolitical” in the sense that it undermines the “politicised relationship in which both parties have power.”

The state abdicates its responsibility to cater for disabled people, to facilitate their empowerment and ensure their dignity, through the promotion of their rights as citizens and most importantly as human beings (Phtiaka 1999). The charity discourse of disability is also well endorsed by the means of public discourse and communication, which constitutes an influential “centre” of power within a socio-political system (Apple 2002). For example an article of a very popular daily newspaper (*Phileleftheros*, 7th January, 2004) extols the offer of a mini bus to a special school by an elitist club. The president of the club expresses the hope that the donation of the mini bus “ will contribute to the socialisation and unproblematic inclusion of the students to the wider social milieu”. Moreover, the Minister of Education expresses his satisfaction for the donation, as it constitutes a “generous gesture, which proves in practice, the club members’ sensitisation and love for disabled children”

The charity model of disability and the paraphernalia of the politics of “non-recognition”, render disabled people “invisible by dominant cultural practice and from disrespect- through routine malignment and disparagement”(Thomas and Glenn 2002;345). There is no denying, that a human rights discourse is largely absent from the Cyprus context despite the plethora of rhetorical proclamations which, ultimately, prove to be little more than vacuous utterances and well articulated euphemisms.

It is interesting to note that the idea and the pervasiveness of Radiomarathon have extended beyond the national boundaries, and its activities are also proudly featuring in London. The “exported” charity activity is intended for Cypriot disabled people who live in the UK. All the indigenous characteristics of Radiomarathon are relayed within a different socio-political context and charity events are taking place in five-star central London Hotels. The events are taking place every November whereby the “proud” organizers of the ingenious Radiomarathon visit London, and in cooperation with the local stakeholders, try to emulate the success that the indigenous Radiomarathon. Not only do, disabled Greek-Cypriot children in London constitute an ethnic minority, but they are also construed to constitute a “human minority”, largely dependent on the goodwill of others.

The charity model of disability is in harmony with the medical model of disability, which also thrives in the Cyprus society. The medical model of disability is as Barton (1993;237) writes “ one of the most powerful influences which has historically shaped policy and practice”, and it is palpable that the case of Cyprus does not constitute an exception to the rule. A “defective” body or mind is immediately attributed to individual and genetic deficit, which inevitably relegates disabled people to the periphery of life and similarly to the periphery of people’s minds.

Power permeates discursively the social edifice, and in consequence, an arbitrary, albeit pervasive, constructed notion of “normality” becomes demeaning and dehumanising to disabled people. Particularly in a country that gives an unprecedented prominence to intellectual abilities, a presumably “disabled” mind is readily condemned and rejected in much the same way as a disabled body does. A charismatic mind is highly appreciated whereas illiteracy has long been considered as an “individual and national disgrace...” (Persianis 1999:55). It is no coincidence, then, that in Cyprus there is an extreme shortage of manual labour whilst at the same time, there are high rates of unemployment among the over-plethora of university graduates (Eliophotou-Menon 1998).

4.8 The feasibility of educational change: The case of Cyprus

It is evident that the theorization of educational change cannot be confined to the legislative attempts and their consequences, but it should encompass the structural as well as the ideological bases upon which the education system is predicated (Power 1992). By implication, the transformation attempts should be directed towards a multi-angled network incorporating a plethora of interrelated elements, which are more or less amenable to change. Certain structural and micro-political factors will be very difficult to eradicate, as they occasionally converge towards the consolidation of the status quo. Not surprisingly, then, the quest of an inclusive education system is a tortuous and complex endeavour, and it is not a seamless and unequivocal process.

In spite of the fact that the decentralisation of the social actor does not insinuate her inability to introduce change in every act of social reproduction, it is indubitable that occasionally these attempts are encumbered by the impediments that structural dynamics pose. The suppressive and productive attributes of power to the formulation of discourse are in a constant and dynamic relation thereby rendering educational change an arduous endeavour. As a result of the incessant games of power, “many institutionalised routines continue to be reproduced even during the most radical episodes of change” (Cohen 1989;46), thus indicating the pervasive influence of structural infrastructure over any transformative attempts that social actors might undertake.

Despite, however, the above considerations, it is occasionally the case that social actors far from attempting to introduce change, reinforce and consolidate the structural bases of the status quo. Put differently, certain social actors during the presumably turbulent period of change are occasionally contributing to the emergence and proliferation of previously non-existent or less powerful institutionalised routines, thus contributing not only to the maintenance, but also to the reinforcement of the status quo. Evidently, educational change is not only inhibited by existent and difficult to eradicate institutional structures, but it is also inhibited by the institutional structures which are erected by the ideological predilections and the pursuant actions of certain social actors during the supposed period of educational change.

This does not constitute an arbitrary conjecture, but reflects the current state of affairs within the Cyprus educational context, whereby the attempts for educational change towards an inclusive discourse are concomitantly marred and jeopardized by certain uncritical actions, starkly emanating from political and individual vested interests. For instance, the appearance of professionals who fight for their presence in mainstream education and their encouragement to do so hinders change and reinforces the status quo. It is now more pertinent to reiterate Phtiaka's (2001b;8) concerns regarding the transformative attempts for the realisation of an inclusive discourse and the paradoxical ascendancy of “professionalism” and “expertism” within the Cyprus context:

....support for existing professionals and training for new ones establishes a *status quo* which, we have argued, is unhealthy and requires change. When this status quo has been established

legitimised and secured, it will formulate and forward ideas and mechanisms, which will resist change.

In the following section the endeavour will be to briefly adumbrate the Cyprus educational context in relation to the attempts undertaken for the realisation of an inclusive education system. In particular, I will attempt to explicate the ways that power and vested interests are implicated in the emergence and expansion of the discourse of professionalism during the presumably transitive period towards inclusive education and practice.

4.9 The Cyprus educational system and inclusive education; The resurgence of segregating education in disguise?

The legislative documents and the stated policy that is inscribed in them, are supplemented by a mass of other educational documents, which are sent to schools and aim to offer further clarifications and guidance to the ways upon which the education of disabled children should be conceptualised and implemented. The previous section has examined some of the ambivalence of the policy documents and the muddled philosophy that is inscribed in them. In gaining however, an overall picture of the current state of affairs, it is also necessary to delineate the actual educational conditions within which these official documents are inserted. Struggle for change cannot be achieved unless the educational context within which these endeavours occur, is critically and thoroughly examined and evaluated (Barton 1997), with the aim to challenge and ultimately, deconstruct the status quo of special education thinking.

The political will of the government to support inclusion could be best evinced through its educational system and the rearrangements that are supposed to be taking place (or have been taking place) in order to support an inclusive discourse. Thus, has the Cyprus government attempted to reshuffle the education system and facilitate inclusion? Do the rearrangements, which have taken place, reflect the precepts upon which inclusive education is predicated? To what extent is the special education status quo supported or exacerbated? In what ways are the multifarious vested interests evinced within the Cyprus education system?

As has been previously argued, the legislation oscillates between contradictory discourses that give plenty of flexibility to those who want to act according to their vested interests. Cyprus is in the midst of an ideological conflict regarding the precepts upon which a regenerated inclusive educational system will be predicated. It is quite evident, however, that having to choose between different traditions, which have long before tested by other countries, Cyprus opts for the medical model of disability. Thus, far from learning from the mistakes of the Western European experience, the same mistakes are uncritically repeated (Phtiaka 2001c), without contemplating the cost these might have for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Phtiaka (2001c;7) speculates how illusory has been her expectation that Cyprus could directly proceed to “an inclusive education system without needing to first break down the sophisticated special education categories.” The current inimical to inclusion trends cannot be attributed only to ignorance and to the benign justification that “such a multitude of changes cannot easily be digested” (Phtiaka 2001a;141). Rather, the case of Cyprus constitutes striking evidence that

the social, political, economic and professional vested interests which have dictated the growth of special education have not disappeared, and the control of decisions and money by individuals and groups remain (Tomlinson 1982;172).

Even though until recently Cyprus has been lacking professionals; namely speech therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists (Phtiaka 2001b) this situation now seems to have been reversed. Many professionals have appeared in the educational fore and are increasingly seeking the endorsement of their ascendancy. It is paradoxical that whilst Tomlinson referred to the professional vested interests regarding special education as early as in 1982, Cyprus revives this phenomenon more than twenty years later! As Phtiaka (2001b;8) whilst referring to the current situation in Cyprus, poignantly puts it: “At a time when conditions once considered pathological are attributed to social construction and the medical model is abandoned even by its old supporters (Bovair 1993), we are still searching for the perfect diagnosis and therapy”.

How then, can this paradoxical reversion be explained, especially under the light of the international prevalence of an inclusive philosophy and practice? What vested interests made the newly appeared professionals in Cyprus claim their ascendancy?

4.10 The paradox of educational restructuring; The ascendancy of professionalism

The pious proclamations for the integration and later inclusion of disabled children in mainstream schools was paradoxically ushered in by the appointment of certain professionals in primary schools, with the aim to provide help to disabled children either in individualistic “pull out” programmes or within the resource units attached to mainstream schools. Moreover, the integration movement has provided the possibility to provide individualistic help not only to disabled children with statements but also to many other children who were thought to be “behind” their peers. The expansion of the provision has meant that more and more professionals were needed. Thus, the supposedly restructuring of the education system in order to be in alignment with the new policy imperatives, has been primarily concerned with the expansion of professionalism and the resurgence of the medical model of disability.

The appointment of a substantial number of professionals within ordinary schools opened up new employment possibilities for more and more professionals, who have hitherto exerted pressure on the government in order to secure a permanent work position in ordinary schools. The increasing unemployment of university graduates in Cyprus, and given the fact that “ the best outlet for the educated has been employment in the public service” (Persianis 2003;52), led many students to pursue studies related to these newly appeared professions that gave them good employment possibilities.

It is worth noting, that unlike many other European countries, employment in public primary and secondary schools is characterised by great competition, since a very attractive remuneration, very good working conditions (7:45 am-1:00pm) and other benefits are provided. Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou (1998;36) for instance, whilst analysing the factors that influence so many students to choose to become teachers in public schools, write the following; “ ...such benefits are the status of the profession, the relatively short working hours, vacations, immediate or definite employment and salary, which are experienced by all public school teachers in Cyprus”. Thus, the intrusion of professionals like speech therapists and work-therapists in mainstream

schools, who have been traditionally employed in hospitals and special schools, is now a reality.

It is also interesting to note that in order to work as a special teacher in ordinary schools, they are expected to have a bachelor degree in education and a diploma or a master's degree in special education. Certain professionals, however, like psychologists, who are temporarily assigned to these positions, exert pressure to the government to change the Service Plans. Their ultimate aim is to prohibit mainstream teachers, with an additional qualification in special education, to be assigned as special teachers and minimize the number of unemployed psychologists who are registered in the catalogues of the Educational Service for employment in the public schools. In so doing psychologists and other professionals who actually know little if anything about teaching and about the school curriculum, believe that they can secure permanent and enviable employment within public schools (personal contact with the general secretary of POED_ The Pancyprian Organization of Greek-Cypriot Teachers, November 2004)

Thus, whilst in many other countries psychologists and speech therapists are assigned peripatetic and part-time positions in mainstream schools and their role is merely supportive, professionals in Cyprus claim permanency and favourable conditions for their career advancement within mainstream settings. Professionals' vested interests, thus, have shifted from special education to mainstream education under the light of the supposedly educational restructuring towards an inclusive discourse!

The intrusion of professionals within mainstream settings has, thus, established a new kind of status quo that inhibits to a great extent the possibility to proceed to a radical restructuring of the education system predicated on the precepts of an inclusive discourse. The expanding appointment of professional within ordinary schools endorses disabled children's "difference" and their inability to participate in a common curriculum. Even though it would be naïve to underestimate the fact that disabled people require medical care and support (Barton 1993), the overemphasis on their individual pathology aspect, jeopardizes the attempts for inclusive education (MacArthur 2004).

Currently, it is clearly evident that the exhilarating proclamations for inclusion are reduced to the disquieting articulation of special education resource units within mainstream schools (MEC 1998), and the unprecedented expansion of the medical model of disability that requires the increasing employment of professionals within mainstream schools. The precepts upon which an inclusive discourse should be predicated are threatened by the inability of the government to resist political and individual vested interests, and proceed to a meticulous and substantial educational change that will recognise the political nature of disability.

4.11 Conclusion

In this chapter I attempted to make transparent the intricately complicated nature of special educational policymaking as it is constituted within an interactive network of reciprocal and adversarial relations. It is no coincidence, then, that the attempts for the realisation of an inclusive discourse are characterised as a struggle (Vlachou 1997), and in particular, as a discursive struggle whereby a profusion of interrelated social, historical, ideological dynamics converge to the ascendancy of certain discourses against which the education of disabled children is conceived and defined. It is crucial that the critical examination and analysis of these dynamics should be brought to the centre rather than the periphery of educational policy analysis. Even though this might constitute, at a certain extent, a subjective endeavour (Vlachou-Balafouti and Sideris 2000; p.p 28-29), depending on the “regimes of truth” of each researcher, this is an absolutely necessary task if we are to provide, reiterating Ball, a decent analysis of educational policy.

Thus, Cyprus special educational policies should be analysed against the backdrop of the idiomorphic conditions and conjectures that contributed to their creation and evolution. Inevitably, such an analysis requires a critical, albeit not a reprehensive, stance. Therefore, by providing a critique of the Cypriot socio-political system it is not aimed to underestimate the progress and the ameliorative attempts undertaken so far, in spite of the inimical conditions and unfavourable historical exigencies. Criticism should be considered as a “duty” of the citizen (Apple 2002 cited in

Closs2003;158) and much more, as a “duty” of a social scientist who envisions “ a post special needs era” (Slee 2003;213). Reiterating Apple (2002;27):

In my mind, however, social criticism is the ultimate act of patriotism...rigorous criticism of a nation's policies demonstrates a commitment to the nation itself...it signifies that I/we live here and that this is indeed our country and our flag as well (cited in Closs 2003;158)

Given the current situation, Cyprus is at a transitional stage and despite the fact that the road towards an inclusive education system is still fraught with difficulties, it is hoped that it will not be long before it would be able to efface all the adversarial conditions that encumber rhetoric to become reality. Notwithstanding the institutionalised and the historically rooted nature of the discourses that exclude and disparage disabled children, their gradual reversibility constitutes a feasible prospect. As Foucault (1981; 51) pertinently puts it: “ ..discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy”. Thus, the relations of power are not confined to the subjugating effects of power but they imply the productive effects of power, as conceptualised and envisioned by Foucault, something that spawns possibilities of resistance and reversibility. These possibilities flare an air of optimism and make transparent that the nexus of knowledge and power that constitutes special education policymaking is not impermeable to change. Consequently, the realisation of an inclusive discourse becomes a more feasible prospect, when, however, it is genuinely and fervently envisioned and pursued by those who are institutionally empowered to contribute to the constitution of “today's discourse” undergirding Cyprus special education policymaking.

CHAPTER FIVE

Methodology

Introduction

Special education policy is conceptualised and shaped within an interactive network of ideological and structural dynamics whereby the notion of power is central. The concept of special needs emanates from the interplay of unequal power relations and as Tomlinson (1985;163) so pertinently argues, it constitutes the “ ideological rationalisation for those who have the power to shape and define the expanding special education system”.

Postmodernism disavows the reliance in absolutistic and mono-dimensional considerations. Foucault for instance, despite the multidimensional and occasionally contradictory nature of his work, is of relevance since he is not concerned with “truth” but with the ways that this truth is produced. The “will to truth” is inexorably linked with the loci of power that produce, disseminate and bolster it. As Adorno (1982;462), a forefather of postmodernism so succinctly puts it, “ The power of reason today is the blind [sic] reason of those who currently hold power” (cited in Denzinger 1995;445).

Foucault regards the constitution of subjectivity as resulting from power relations and not as a pre-existent or given entity. Foucault’s genealogies act as histories of the present in the sense that they aim to interrogate and dismantle the ostensible orthodoxies of the time. This kind of approach chimes with what Castel (1992) calls a problematizing approach whereby the “ ‘givens’ of the present are contested and represented in new light through the import of the historical analysis” (cited in Baker and Heyning 2004;30-31).

Bearing in mind that special education policy is primarily constituted by the “ regimes of truth” that the most powerful social actors uphold, central to the analysis of education policy should be the thorough examination of these regimes, along with the discursive practices that produce and sustain them within a particular socio-political and historical context.

The aim of this particular piece of research is to examine the ideological and structural dynamics that have impacted on the formulation of special education policy in Cyprus. Simultaneously, it seeks to investigate the ways that the notion of power has been/is implicated in the production of the “regimes of truth” upon which special education policymaking is predicated.

Having established the theoretical backdrop against which the research will be predicated this chapter depicts the methodological setting through which the aims of the research will be realised. The sought methods of investigation should have the potential to divulge “today’s discourse” in special education policymaking, along with the “fine meshes of power” that inform the constitution of such a discourse. Central to special education policymaking are the “regimes of truth” that the most powerful social actors uphold along with the discursive practices that produce and sustain them within a particular socio-political and historical context.

In particular, as it has been previously stated, the scope of research will be circumscribed within the following research questions:

- 1) How special education policies evolved in interaction with the contemporaneous structural and political dynamics?
- 2) In what ways are beliefs and ideologies linked to economic, social and political considerations?
- 3) How asymmetrical power relations are evinced within the Cyprus policy context?
- 4) What is the discourse and objectives that powerful social actors hold regarding inclusive education?

5.1 The empirical setting

Having pursued a theoretical investigation of the problem under inquiry, it is important to delineate the empirical setting through which the aims of the research will be explored. Given the fact that policy is constituted within the reciprocal relation between agents and structures, the appropriate methods of inquiry should be directed towards the investigation of the ideological infrastructure that permeates both agents and structures within a particular socio-historical context. Thus, bearing in mind the focus and the idiomorphic character of this kind of research, along with the theoretical assumptions upon which this research is predicated, two qualitative methods of inquiry will be used; namely interviews and documentary analysis.

The appropriateness of qualitative methods in this kind of research is attested by Duke (2002;43) who as he pertinently puts it:

Qualitative methods can be used to delve into parts of the policy process which quantitative methods cannot reach. They have the potential to explore innovation, originality, complexity, interactions, conflicts and contradictions.

It is expected that by interviewing a selected assemble of powerful social actors, it will be possible to identify the prevalent ideologies that constitute the political and structural dynamics, which underpin Cyprus special educational policy. A decision was taken, therefore, to target the current “movers and shakers” (Cookson 1994;116) of special education policy within the upper and the lower layers of the governmental terrain. It was also considered as being very important to interview powerful social actors, who either used to be at the forefront of the government some years ago, or whose realm falls entirely outside the government. It is believed that these people can provide useful perspectives regarding the historical dimension of special education policies and moreover, given their “political detachment” from the government, they can potentially provide a clearer and a less politically encumbered picture of Cyprus’ special education policy and the power/knowledge relations that are implicated therein. As Ball (1994c; 98) contends: “ I quickly learned that interviews with the retired and ‘out of office’ were often more revealing, interesting and frank than those with incumbents”.

In addition, documentary analysis will be used as a supplementary research method, aimed to identify and examine the prevalent discourses, which inform the legislative and other pertinent documents.

5.2 Details of Sample Populations

The selection of the ‘sample’ constitutes a very important stage of a survey. The “sampling plan” or the ways that the sample population is chosen, affects to a great extent the reliability of a survey. As far as this research is concerned, a non-probability and in particular a purposive sample will be used, not only for the people sample, but also for the theoretical (documentary) sample. A purposive sample is the one that is selected according to researcher’s judgements that will best satisfy the requirements of the study (Robson 2002). As Creswell (1994;149) put it “ The idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants (or documents and visual materials) that will best answer the research question”.

5.3 Research ethics

One important task of the researcher is to address the perplexing issue of ethics in social research, and in particular in qualitative research. The involvement of human beings in social research necessitates that the researchers should ensure good ethical practice throughout the research endeavour (BERA 2004; ESRC 2006). The researchers should constantly adhere to key ethical principles and make explicit their commitment towards this end

The relationship between the researcher and her subjects is inevitably implicated within the interplay of unequal power relations. The researcher needs to try minimize the imbalance of power implicated in the research process by addressing an array of fundamental ethical issues. It primarily needs ensuring that the subjects become knowledgeable regarding the aims and the purposes of the research. Also, it is necessary that the subjects become aware of their own contribution to the research

process and the possible impact this might have on them as well as on “their position within occupational settings” (ESRC 2006;21).

The latter point is especially pertinent to this piece of research whereby the subjects have key positions in the governmental terrain, and therefore any information they provide conveys not only their personal values but also the values underpinning their governmental position. Having said this, their participation in this kind of research can go so far as to have possible political implications, if certain ethical issues are not carefully attended to. Even though the chasm of power imbalance between the researcher and her subjects is significantly minimized, or even reversed (Ball 1994c) in interviewing the powerful, there are other sensitive and equally important issues that need not only to be addressed but also to be given pre-eminent consideration. The issues concerned are the confidentiality of the information given and the anonymity of the respondents.

Not surprisingly, the respondents were particularly concerned about the anonymity of their responses. I had to assure them, on several occasions, that I was to use pseudonyms for their responses. On the day of the interview all respondents consented to be tape-recorded, after reassuring them again about my confidentiality and about the fact that nobody would listen to the recordings apart from me. Also, I assured them that everything quoted in the research report would be anonymized.

Moreover, before consenting participation I provided them with details of my research. Further to explaining the purpose, methods and anticipated possible uses of the research, most of the respondents asked to be given the interview schedule before the interview day so as to have time to go through the questions. I handed over the interview schedule to all but three respondents because I did not have the chance to visit them prior to the interview. These three respondents were retired and the interviews took place in their homes.

Having understood the purpose of my research, the respondents were given the opportunity to make an informed decision regarding their participation in the research. Throughout the interviewing processes, the respondents were more than willing to provide me with the necessary information. Despite the fact that most of them had

very busy work schedules all, but one respondent, arranged so as to have plenty time for the interview. In some cases they asked their secretaries not to disturb them whilst in some other cases they switched off their mobiles. This is something that made me feel respected and confident that they intended to give me the best possible information they could. At the end of the interviews, most of the respondents urged me to contact them again if I needed more information and at the same time, they asked me to send them a report with the outcomes of my research or any other relevant information or articles based on it. After being interviewed, notwithstanding some initial scepticism, respondents felt part of the research endeavour and showed a serious interest in being informed about the outcomes of the research.

During the writing up process I needed to be extremely careful in reporting interviewees' responses so as to ensure anonymity. Given the extremely small population of Cyprus, there is the danger that the full anonymity of the respondents might not be fully accomplished, in the sense that the people who are implicated in special educational policymaking decisions are quite few and can be easily identified. I used pseudonyms and in some cases I made vague references to the kind of positions they held (e.g governmental terrain, parental association etc) hoping thereby to reduce the possibility of their identification.

Ethical concerns should also inform documentary research as there might be confidential information that should not be given away or published. For that reason, I was asked to seek consent in order to access the archive at the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as at the Parliament. The process towards this end is described in a chapter that follows.

5.4 Respondents selected from the upper and lower echelon of the government

It is well recognised within the literature that interviewing powerful people is idiomorphic and entails difficulties which the researcher should bear in mind. Interviewing powerful people should be recognised and examined as being intertwined with the "play of power" (Ball 1994c), and the peculiarities this might involve.

Perhaps the most difficult thing is gaining access to interviewing these people, who frequently have overloaded work schedules and might be sceptical to any possible “intruders” to their closed governmental and political mechanisms. However, as far as the latter point is concerned, the fact that I am a young woman might facilitate the process since I might be regarded as being less “harmful” than a male counterpart. As Walford (1994;224) succinctly puts it: “female researchers may be at an advantage in being perceived as being “harmless”, especially if they are relatively young and not in senior positions within their own organizations”.

Notwithstanding the anticipated difficulties involved in approaching and interviewing powerful people, I hoped that it would be possible to interview certain key policy makers within the governmental terrain; namely the Minister of Education, the president and a senior member of the Educational Committee of the Parliament and two other members of the committee, the president of the Education Service, along with the General Director of Primary Education. Moreover, I anticipated interviewing five special and general education inspectors, two general coordinators of special education appointed both at the ministry and the regional special education offices. The people selected constitute the overwhelming majority of the stakeholders that can be characterised “key policymakers” within the governmental terrain. Interestingly, most of them have been also involved in the struggles over the evolution of special educational policies thereby being able to provide their own testimony regarding the historical trajectory of special education policymaking development in Cyprus.

Beyond interviewing the current key policy makers, it is important to include among the targeted population, certain people who used to be key stakeholders during the governance of other political parties. Educational policymaking is significantly affected by the ideological platforms upon which the governing political parties are predicated, and it is expected that this will result in diverse viewpoints, as well as a virulent criticisms concerning the shortcomings of the current special education policy and provision of the government. Moreover, it is expected that the non-governmental actors will be more able to provide a more detached and comprehensive analysis of the current power relations inherent in the policymaking process.

The targeted population thus includes an ex Minister of Education and an ex president of the Parliamentary Educational Committee who are now parliamentary members of the main oppositional party. Not only will their views elicit the historical dimension of special education policy making in Cyprus, but they will also provide us, as it has been earlier discussed, with a more “detached”, or at least a different portrayal of the power discourses that permeate special education policymaking in Cyprus. It is exactly for this reason that it is also considered crucial to include within the targeted population, certain people who do not, or no longer belong within the government; namely an ex special education inspector, two academics in tertiary education, the president of an organization for disabled people and a prominent member of a parental association for disabled children. The number of people eventually interviewed was seventeen, something that constitutes a representative sample given the small population of Cyprus. Each interview lasted between one and a half hours and three hours.

5.5 Theoretical sample

I aimed to have an extensive, albeit selective, access to the most important governmental legislative, parliamentary and other documents and circulars pertaining to special education in Cyprus, since the inception of the first legislation document in 1979. Under the typology introduced by Scott (1990), “open published documents of State origin” constituted the bulk of the targeted theoretical sample. It needs noting, however, that my theoretical sample is not delimited to “State origin” documents. Rather, it is also intended to have access to documents emanating outside the governmental terrain, for example documents prepared by parental organizations, professional associations etc. Humes (1997;22-23) is persuasive on the necessity of using unofficial document in analysing the policy process:

There is I think a tendency to undervalue informal documentary sources. Certainly in my own research I have found this to be extremely useful in helping me to see connections between people and between institutions.

The theoretical sample cannot be pre-defined, as the exact selection of the pertinent documents will be part of the research process. It is hoped that the existence of certain

important documents that I may not have come across until that time, would emerge through interviewing.

5.6 Data collection procedures

5.6.1 Procedures for obtaining documentary sample

Most of the legislative documents were obtained during my visit to the Ministry of Education and Culture. As part of the research process I had an unofficial discussion with a key official at the Ministry who was willing to provide me with some of these documents. As I was told there were many documents pertaining to special education within the Archive Sector of the Ministry. Access to this sector, however, could be only obtained after submitting a written request to the General Director of Education indicating the reasons for seeking access. Access was eventually granted without any considerable problems.

As far as the parliamentary minutes are concerned, I called the secretarial office of the parliament and when I asked if it was possible to have access to the parliamentary minutes pertaining to special education, I was told that this was acceptable provided that I had the dates of the parliamentary sittings, because the minutes were organised by dates and not by themes. Further I was advised that I would need a considerable amount of time as the archive sector is huge and it only remains opened from 9:00 am to 12:00 am.

It should be noted however, that when I interviewed a key member of the Educational Committee of the Parliament I was informed that I could find only summaries of the pertinent sittings since detailed minutes were not kept. He was, however, very helpful and provided me with a considerable compilation of documents from the parliamentary archive. Since these were not enough, I went to the parliament and I went through the minutes (I also did this through the internet regarding the minutes after 2000). Indeed, I could not find anything apart from the summaries of the sittings, which were of little use for my research since it could not enable me to examine the different “centres” of power and the struggles that are taking place within the parliamentary arena.

Given the fact that most of the issues are discussed in more detail within the various committees of the parliament, I sought access to the archive of the educational committee regarding special education. I was, however, told that I was not allowed to do so because there might have been some confidential documents that I should not have seen. I insisted and I told them that I was already given some of these documents by a senior official and that access was sought for research purposes. Having been quite persistent they contacted the General Director of the Parliament who asked to see me in order to explain him the reasons why I was seeking access. Access was eventually granted, after I went to his office and explained in detail the reasons I was seeking access. Overall, I realised that had not been so persistent and audacious, I would have not been able to have access to the specific documents.

It is interesting to note that among other documents I found the minutes of the first discussion of the committee in 1978 that was concerned with the reasons that advocated the voting of the first special education Law in 1979.

5.6.2 Procedures for obtaining interview sample

It was with great apprehension that I speculated the ways that I could gain access to interviewing these powerful people, without the devastating prospect of being turned down. Nevertheless, I was determined to be persistent and try all the possible means.

The visit of the Minister of Education to the offices of the Cyprus Educational Mission in London gave me a good chance to introduce myself to him and asked him whether it was possible to interview him about special education policy in Cyprus, as this would constitute a crucial part for my research project. He nodded and told me to contact his personal secretary well in advance, in order to arrange a possible meeting.

In spite of the fact that the first and may be the most difficult step, has been quite promising, I started thinking of the possible ways that I could approach the other interviewees. I immediately rejected the idea of sending a letter asking them for an interview, since I considered this as being rather impersonal. Given the mentality of a small nation, which assigns great importance to interpersonal relations, I was almost

sure that such an attempt was deemed to fail. What I did, instead, was to visit some of the prospective interviewees in person and ask for their valuable contribution to my research. Being a young woman and not viewed as too important has indeed been an “access easing” factor (Gewirtz and Ozga 1994;193). In cases that personal access was difficult and entailed bureaucratic procedures, I asked a personal acquaintance of mine, who happens to be a very respected political person, to contact them on my behalf. In that way the possibilities for rejection were considerably reduced.

It is important to note, that interviews took place in two phases. The analysis started immediately after the first phase in order to reflect on the existing data and, if necessary, to make the necessary amendments for the second phase of interviewing. Miles and Huberman (1994;50) advocate the early analysis of the interview data and write the following:

It helps the fieldworker cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better data. It can be a healthy corrective for built-in blind spots. It makes analysis an ongoing lively enterprise that contributes to the energizing process of fieldwork.

Indeed, the early analysis of the data spawned new perspectives and considerations and acted as a catalyst to acquire a better and more in-depth understanding of the major themes pertaining to my research. Having the chance to reflect on the existing data enabled me to interrogate and forge a new and more “lively” relationship between the theoretical and empirical settings of my research.

5.7 Research instruments

5.7.1 Documentary analysis

Documentary evidence has been, according to McCulloch and Richardson (2000;85), “the most single important source of historical research in education” and in particular “policy reports constitute an important and widely used primary source of historical research”. Document analysis belongs to the group of research methods that are characterised as unobtrusive or non-reactive measures, as they constitute an indirect

rather than a direct method of enquiry (Robson 2002). For that reason, documentary research is as Wellington (2000;121) contends an “extremely efficient, cost effective and productive” means of collecting data.

It should be noted, however, that its use as a sole method of enquiry is widely questioned, as it is believed to have certain drawbacks associated with the validity of the research. By implication, its usefulness is usually acknowledged only in conjunction with other research methods. The shortcomings attributed to the documentary based research, can be related to the wide-held assumption according to which, the interpretation of a text should embrace the discursive institutional and political processes within which the text is embedded. Text, in other words, is considered insignificant without its discursive context and thereby, other methods of inquiry should be used, in order to analyse and expose the dynamic and reciprocal interrelations between text and context. I intend the interviews should serve this purpose.

It should be noted, however, that contrary to the aforesaid viewpoint, Atkinson and Coffey (1997;47) contend that beyond their complementary role, documentary materials should be regarded as “data in their own right in the sense that they can enshrine, as they write, “a distinctively documentary version of social reality”, without however, eschewing the fact that documents are part of the interactional order and that they should be regarded as such. This is in alignments with Silverman’s (2001;235) critique that the researcher becomes an ironist when she uses “one account to undercut another, while remaining blind to the sense of each account in the context in which it arises”.

5.7.2 Interviews

Interviewing, in contrast, to document-based research, constitutes a direct method of research as there is a reciprocal interaction between the researcher and the research subjects (Cohen and Manion 2000;269). For that reason, interviews “can reach the parts which other methods cannot reach” (Wellington 2000;72). Thus, even though it is acknowledged that it is impossible to establish any “sort of inherent truth in an educational situation”, interviews have the potential to give an opportunity to present

interviewee's " thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives." (ibid;71), thereby providing a useful insight into how certain key policy actors construct their own "realities" or their own assumptive words regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Understandably, of paramount importance, would also be to examine and discuss the occasionally ambivalent and uncertain nature of that reality (Miller and Glassner 1997), and the impact that this might bear on inclusive education policies.

Nevertheless, as far as the scope of this research is concerned, interviewing may illuminate crucial parameters of the policymaking formulation dynamics, which otherwise could have remained unspoken. Reiterating Hanson (1972;34) " interviews can shed light on elusive but important problems such as how decisions are reached, how influence is exerted....and how organizations are run" (cited in McHugh 1994;54).

Given the above considerations, interviewing was deemed to be an appropriate method for research, in spite of the fact that it is a rather time consuming method (Robson 2002) and entails certain sources of bias, arising both from the interviewees, the researcher and the nature of the subject–researcher interaction (Cohen and Manion 2000). It needs noting however, that the bias attributed to interviewing, is eschewed by postmodernism, according to which, social knowledge is considered as heterogeneous and context specific. Kvale (1996;286), in defence of subjectivity attributed to interviewing, provides the following powerful, albeit paradoxical, statement:

With the object of the interview understood as being within a linguistically constituted and interpersonally negotiated social world, the qualitative research interview obtains a privileged position regarding objective knowledge of the social world.

Notwithstanding, however, the post-modern viewpoint, there are certain kinds of bias that inhere within interviewing. For example, the interviewees might tell whatever might be appropriate and generally acceptable, given the institutional, social and discursive constraints that are imposed on them. This is especially true when interviewers hold key positions within the discursive mechanisms of the government, and by no means do they want to posit themselves in opposition to the preordained

governmental policy orthodoxies. Moreover, the problem with political interviewing is that unlike lay interviewers politicians are skilled at being interviewed, at eluding questions, at deploying rhetoric, at obfuscation rather than telling the interviewer what they want to hear, speaking without telling anything suggesting significance, avoiding insight, closure, clarity.

5.8 Interview schedule

The interviews with key policy actors were intended to elicit the ideological and structural dynamics that are part of special education policymaking in Cyprus. Interviewees' views, assumptions, values and beliefs, coupled with the discursive processes that emanate from them, constitute an integral part of these dynamics. Their identification and thorough investigation could be only achieved by a multi-perspective interview schedule, consisted by different sub-sets of questions (see appendix 1). Semi-structured interviews enables the interviewer to be flexible and have a selective approach to the schedule and omit those questions that have been already answered or might not fall within the interviewee's "realm of knowledge", and to pursue issues when they arise as significant within the interview or are unanticipated altogether and to elicit instances, examples, specificities.

For instance, it is important to distinguish the historical dimension of the questions and the current state of affairs, so as not to have an overloaded interview schedule for each respondent. Historical questions can be directed towards those who held key positions some years ago, and who might have had a first hand experience of the special education policy dynamics at that time.

5.9 Collecting the data; some reflections

Advocating the realisation of an inclusive discourse presupposes that the binaries of special and mainstream education are challenged, as the whole education system is re-constructed and re-generated in order to accept and value diversity. Cyprus with its new special education legislation is supposed to be heading towards this direction. As things stand, however, the education system is wholly unprepared to realise the ambitious rhetorical proclamations of the government. Even the people within the

Ministry who are supposed to be the first to implement and instigate a top-down dissemination and implementation of the stated policy, do not do so.

It was not difficult to come to this conjecture after general inspectors of primary education were reluctant to be interviewed since as they claimed, they did not know much about special education as it was outside their “realm of expertise”. I approached almost half of them at the Ministry of Education and all of them replied that I should have interviewed the inspectors of special education. When I told them that I had already interviewed them and that I was also interested in their views, they told me that they really did not know much about special education. Even in those cases that were really eager to be interviewed, they changed their mind when they were told that it was about special education. They repeatedly said that they really did not know much regarding special education because they had other responsibilities and they were not informed on the subject.

So much so was their lack of interest that even though two of them consented to contact them again for an interview, I did not do so. I really found it unethical, to interview somebody who seemed anything but willing or confident to be interviewed.

5.10 Conclusion

Having established the theoretical backdrop against which the research will be predicated this chapter depicted the methodological setting through which the aims of the research will be realised. The sought methods of investigation should have the potential to divulge “today’s discourse” in special education policymaking, along with the “fine meshes of power” (Foucault 1994;122) that characterise the constitution of such a discourse. Central to special education policymaking are the “regimes of truth” that the most powerful social actors uphold along with the discursive practices that produce and sustain them within a particular socio-political and historical context. The fine meshes of power inhere in the ideological infrastructure that permeates both agents and structures and therefore, the unveiling process should take place within an interactive and multidimensional network.

Interviews have the potential to make transparent the “will to truth” of the most powerful policymakers whilst simultaneously, they give the opportunity to investigate the ways that this “will to truth” is infiltrated, bolstered or suppressed by the equally powerful and pervasive institutionalised regimes of truth of a particular spatial and chronological context. Simultaneously, documentary analysis is used not only as a supplementary research tool but also as an alternative tool that can potentially shed more light to any obscured and undetected micro-technologies of power inscribed in the policymaking process.

The next chapter attempts to provide a pluralistic approach to the analysis of the data. Whilst annihilating any forms of binarism the aim is to provide a comprehensive and viable framework for the analysis of the data that has the potential to grasp the convoluted relations of power enshrined in the policymaking process. The micro-technologies of power colluding towards the constitution of the prevalent regimes of truth undergirding “today’s discourse” in special education policymaking can be divulged by the concomitant and interactive utilization of a conventional and post-modernized methods of data analysis.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis of the data

Introduction

Evidently, the power knowledge grid of today's discourse cannot be adequately dismantled by the utilization of conventional means of analysis. The "fine meshes of power" (Foucault 1994;122) that produce and sustain the discursive constitution of special education policymaking can be divulged only when we critically analyse the power that inheres within the linguistic representation of these regimes of truth. Critical Discourse Analysis is intended to delve into the linguistic micro-technologies of power that are entrenched within texts and within the narrative stories of key policy actors, and make transparent the discursive linkages and interactions inherent in them. Put differently, CDA aims to provide the dialogical means that can contribute to the exposure of the constituent ideological and structural dynamics of the power knowledge grid that produces and sustains "today's discourse" in Cyprus special education policymaking.

6.1 Analysis of the data:

The qualitative nature of this particular kind of research renders necessary the provision of a detailed account regarding the processes by which I intend to analyse and validate the data. In so doing it will be possible to overcome some of the criticisms and indeed, some of the shortcomings that qualitative research has received so far. As Crossley and Vulliamy (1997;19) put it:

Qualitative data have always presented particular problems for analysis since not only do they consist of words rather than numbers, but fieldworkers have in the past been notoriously reticent about revealing their own procedures.

This research is predicated on an amalgam of historical and sociological tools, which aim to provide a critical account of special educational policymaking within a particular socio-political system. Brariun and Graff as early as in 1977 point out the value of historical perspectives in social science research (cited in Robson 2002) and the extended possibilities they can give to the researcher. The assemblage of policy reports constitute an important part of historical research (Scott 1990; McCulloch and

Richardson 2000) and their analysis should be the result of critical and multi-dimensional consideration. According to McCulloch and Richardson (2000), it is important that the focus extends beyond the arid analysis of the text, to issues relating to the author, the context, the audience, the influence of the work, as well as the processes involved in its production and the interests that underlie its developments. In other words, the “sociological imagination” should inform any endeavour for historical research, thus offering fresh perspectives and opening up new possibilities for textual analysis.

It has been suggested that techniques of document analysis can be the result of “common sense” (Tosh 1991;71 cited in Duffy 1999;116) something, however that is only partly true. It is crucial to acquire a “higher common sense” that will enable the researcher to engage in an essentially critical endeavour and fully explore the evidence, so as to “squeeze the last drop from each document.” (Marwick 1989;233 cited in Duffy 1999;116). Such claims reinforced the claims made by the critics of qualitative analysis according to which qualitative analysis is restricted to the three “I’s” namely, “insight, intuition and impression” (Dey 1995;78 cited in Creswell 1994;142), thus attributing, more or less, a poetic and a subconscious perspective on qualitative research. However, whilst acknowledging the relative and idiosyncratic character of qualitative research, it should be noted that this does not imply “research arbitrariness”, in the sense that the research is predicated on a contour (Creswell 1994) or a general framework.

It is primarily important that the researcher should consider other possible alternatives and adopt those analytical tools that best suit the aims of her research. In this respect, the analysis should take place within an eclectic conceptual framework (Creswell 1994), whilst the researcher should bear in mind some critical considerations regarding the scope and the purpose of textual analysis, always in relation to a particular piece of research. Thus, what does text analysis involve and what parameters does the researcher consider? How can textual analysis be established as an illuminative and simultaneously, a trustworthy historical and sociological tool for the analysis of special educational policy? How can the researcher adopt a pluralistic, albeit eclectic, methodology for textual analysis?

As far as the scope of this piece of research is concerned, it is primarily important to focus on the meaning of the text, thus making transparent the ideologies and by extension, the theoretical underpinnings of the dominant discourses that imbue the text. Generally, it is crucial as Scott (1990;28) writes, to “decipher the script and translate the language into the linguistic forms current in the community of researchers of which the investigators is a part”. Through this procedure it is more possible to divulge the hegemonic discourses that surface within the text, and multifariously affect special education policymaking. Moreover, it is also important to explicate the processes that might have taken place prior to the production of texts. Reiterating McCulloch (2004;4) “...documents need also to be interpreted in the light of specific factors involved in their production and context, such as personal, social, political and historical relationships.” This however cannot be done when the researcher relies entirely on the texts. Oral history, based on interviews, can immensely contribute to the historical research as it can facilitate the exposition of “meanings, discourses and practical ideologies, about position and shifting patterns of influence, about ‘the will to truth’ ” (Ball 1994a;107).

The analysis of the text and its hegemonic discourses, primarily presupposes the identification of recurrent patterns that constitute the prevalent discourses. The identification of patterns enables the researcher to justify her claims regarding the discursive constitution of the text, that is, the presumable dominant discourses that emanate from the text. As Wood and Kroger (2000;117-118) poignantly put it:

Patterns are interesting in their own right; they also serve a critical role in the development and warranting of interpretations of structure and function. As analysis proceeds, the claims that are developed about the patterns and about the function and structure of the discourse are checked and refined against the segments that have been examined and against the remaining segments. This process will usually require the revision of claims and the reanalysis of segments. A critical part of the process is the search for exceptions.

It can be held however, that the search for patterns and exceptions alone cannot serve the scope and aims of policy analysis research. This is because policy is occasionally incoherent, fragmented and fraught with incessant struggles over its constitution and definition. Therefore, in order to depict the tortuous complexity of educational policy, we should move beyond the conventional analytical boundaries of historical research. Foucault inaugurates a new kind of historical research and by extension, of textual

analysis, which emanates from hermeneutics (Scott 1990) and constitutes an open-ended and ever-changing process. Barriers are annihilated and new perspectives, once being unthinkable and inconceivable, emerge and inevitably, alter the “scene”. As Marshall (1990;18-19) writes;

Instead of reaching outwards towards an objective truth, history turns inwards for Foucault, becoming story plot, myth, fabrication. It is something that is to be used in the present and for the future; it is not something that captures ‘reality’, and certainly not a reality of the past..... ‘historical truths’ rest upon complex, contingent and fragile grounds.

These “complex, contingent and fragile grounds” emanate from context and time specific “snapshots” of intense and incessant confrontations, between antithetical forces for control and ascendancy. Not surprisingly then, history is constituted by power and knowledge relations whilst the notion of causality is disavowed. “ The analytic grid is power-knowledge. The methodological imperative then is to examine processes of modern power....” (Marshall 1990;22). This is especially important in educational policy analysis whereby “the significance of the power discourse at the national legislative level cannot be underestimated” (Cookson 1994;119). Power is enshrined in the dominant discourses as they authoritatively promote “certain subjectivities and meaning systems over others” (Ball 1994b;108).

Even though the Foucauldian history has been characterised as anti-history (Marshall 1990) and has been vehemently criticized (see Gutting 1994), the annihilation of any forms of binarism, as conceived and explained by post-modernism, allows the researcher to fuse the two historical perspectives and provide a pluralistic framework for text analysis and by implication, for educational policy analysis. This seems not only a legitimate but also a necessary element in pursuing a robust analysis of educational policymaking. As Ball (1994c;109) writes:

...no one interpretational mode or set of theoretical tools or interpretational stance is adequate or exhaustive of the analytical possibilities of policy analysis. The same data can be subjected to very different types and levels of interpretation.

In much the same way, Armstrong (2002; 447,450) whilst drawing the distinction between “traditional” and “effective” history writes that:

Traditional histories tend to iron out unevenness, discontinuities and contradictions. Effective history, in contrast, seeks to render more complex, eschewing generalities and simplifications.... An awareness of the complexity of the education landscape made up of so many fractured and contradictory policies, ideologies and practices needs to be informed by sources and voices other than those of “traditional history”.

One of the roles of the historian, then, in whatever discipline, it is to divulge the prevalent forms of legitimised and sanctioned knowledge and the relations of power inherent in them, as they are evinced and disseminated through the institutionalised structures of a given socio-political system. The discourses of power are historically located and interrogated thereby enabling the provision of “a sort of multiplication or pluralization of causes” (Foucault cited in Tamboukou 1999;207). As Goodson and Dowbiggin (1990;105) write:

The task for the historian....is to recover the complex patterns of structuralisation and distribution of power that influence the way in which a society selects, classifies, transmits and evaluates the knowledge it considers to be public.

Evidently, data analysis becomes an even more multidimensional and demanding endeavour if we are to provide a comprehensive framework of educational policy analysis. It would be inappropriate to lose sight of the compounded constitution of texts, which in turn compound the ways that education policy is conceived and realised within a particular socio-historical context. As Apple and Christian Smith (1991;13) write, “...our readings of what knowledge is “in” texts cannot be done by the application of a single formula”.

In this respect the existing documentation and the interviews transcripts should be seen from an entirely different perspective, which differs considerably from the traditional modes of analysis. Thus for instance, as far as interviewing is concerned:

....is no longer seen as a mean of measuring the genuine views of a participant but as a means of exploring the varied ways of making sense, or accounting practices, available to participants. The concern is at the level of language or discursive practices, rather than with the individual (Marshall 1994;95).

Using CDA, is an attempt to get a step further from the conventional methods of qualitative analysis, and, borrowing Ball’s phrase, it enables the researcher to “think otherwise”, without however, eschewing the possibilities that the traditional modes of analysis can offer. Beyond the theme identification and theme connections, CDA

enables the researcher to delve more into certain details, namely into the subtle linguistic characteristics of certain utterances and the power relations that are inscribed in them, thus giving more credence and more depth to the claims made.

By no means, however, should the construction of “alternative regimes of truth” be regarded as unassailable and sacred. Emancipatory change implies the potency to engage in a constant interrogation of the power knowledge grid that produces the each time prevalent orthodoxies underpinning the policymaking process. The existence of a certain and achievable “ends” implies a theoretical impasse that brings us back to the discursive entrapments of the status quo. Foucault eschews the existence of such an “end” as his problematizations and interrogations never stop. As Kendal and Wickham (1999;4) so succinctly write about Foucault’s history:

When we use history, if we are to gain the maximum benefit from the Foucaultian method, we must ensure that we do not allow this history to stop, do not allow it to settle on a patch of imagined sensibleness in the field of strangeness; as Foucault himself says, albeit in a different context, we should seek “to use it, to deform it, to make it protest” (1980a;54).

In this respect inclusion should be regarded as a process and not as an “end”. It is a demanding and complicated process that implies an incessant struggle, an intense “agonism” between varied power relations within the different arenas of educational policymaking. If we are to talk about emancipatory change we should ensure that there is a constant interrogation and problematization of the prevalent discourses that constitute inclusive education policy and practice and therefore, I do not advocate the existence of any blueprints for the realisation of inclusion. What I advocate, however, is the fact that core to these problematizations should be an unambiguous acceptance of the rights of disabled people to be regarded and treated as equal and dignified members of mainstream school communities, whereby they can be actively engage in the social and academic activities of these communities. A human-rights approach to disability and difference should constitute the discursive backdrop against which the struggles for inclusive education should be taking place. The identification of the ideological and institutional dynamics that undermine inclusion should be considered as an urgent, necessary and continuous task if we are to combat the subjugating effects of power along with its ideological and institutional discursive embodiments.

The conventional methods of special education have been used for a long time and their effectiveness has been widely contested and questioned. Disabled children have been constantly subjected to the suppressive discursive impositions that were legitimated by an array of scientific exegeses. The gaze of individual pathology subjugated the individuality of these children and concomitantly disillusioned and rendered them, along with their advocates, unable to supersede the corrosive and disciplinary technologies of power that were ostensibly working towards “their best interests”. Even though science has avowedly contributed to some extent to the improvement of the educational experiences and living conditions of many disabled people, it has at the same time been manipulated and used as a legitimised means to masquerade a plethora of powerful impositions and vested interests, that ultimately caused more harm rather than good to these children (Bratlinger 1997).

Given the abovementioned considerations it is palpable that there is nothing wrong, when, reiterating Ball, we dare to “think otherwise” and utilize alternative theoretical tools in order to “identify” and “assess” the unequal and intricate interplays of power that traditionally held sway over the field and undermined the subjectivities of disabled children. At least these alternative theoretical predilections eschew the dogmatism of pseudo-science, which focused on individual pathology perspectives, and seek to establish diversity as well as interrogate the core elements in the incessant “agonism” for inclusive education policy and practice.

6.2 Critical Discourse Analysis-CDA

The nature of the study implies that the researcher would seek to have an in depth investigation of the phenomenon under inquiry and come up with critical perspectives and theorizations. Discourse analysis, is intended to examine respondents’ “assumptive worlds” and their prodigious and moulding impact on the phenomenon under investigation. Of crucial importance, therefore, is not to provide statistical generalisations, but to point out powerful and pervasive recurring linguistic themes, thereby exposing the “discursively constructed” reality of respondents (Cameron 2001;16).

Critical discourse analysis goes a step further and focuses on the ways that power manifests itself through language, thus identifying and demystifying the reciprocal power/knowledge relations that beget, and concomitantly, are inscribed within the discursive construction of reality. Thus, critical discourse analysis is more concerned as Mills (1997;134) writes “with questions of possible meanings of different discourses used by participants in speech and in text” and the ways that these meanings are multifariously implicated with power. Put differently, critical discourse analysis aims to expose the powerful discourses and their “constructive effects... upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief” (Fairclough 1992;12).

Most importantly, however, it aims to expose the ways that these constructive effects become a legitimised and naturalized means of accepting inequality (Van Dijk 2001), whereby power is unobtrusively imposed, whilst its corrosive processes become natural, dogmatic and institutionally sanctioned. Thus, reiterating Fairclough (1999;97):

...[CDA]... sets out to make visible through analysis, and to criticize, connections between properties of texts and social processes and relations (ideologies, power relations) which are generally not obvious to people who produce and interpret those texts, and whose effectiveness depends upon this opacity.

This is especially true of political interviews. As far as this research is concerned, critical discourse analysis will be used to examine the ways that powerful discourse structures lead, through educational policymaking, to the disparagement, marginalization and exclusion of disabled people from mainstream education and by extension, from mainstream society. Interviewing and documentary based research will explore the “social representations in the minds of social actors”, and explicate the ways that these constructed schemata constitute the essential link between discourse and dominance (Van Dijk 2001; 301). Power inheres in these representations and influences both the discursive practices and the institutions that bolster and legitimate these practices. Having established the links, CDA aims to disentangle the interrelations of power and divulge, as well as “denaturalise”, the ways that power is intertwined with discourse. Thus, as Hastings (1999;104) writes whilst using CDA to analyse the interviews of certain policymakers for deprived and

underdeveloped areas : “ Given that CDA provides tools for going beyond the face value of what is said or written, it may be an approach which can help to disentangle political “spin” from the underlying substance or rationale of a policy”.

Fairclough (1993) distinguishes two approaches of CDA, one that the focus is on the linguistic microstructures of the text and one that is primarily concerned with the historical and social context of the text and the ways, which social relations and identities are discursively constituted. The latter approach draws heavily on Foucault, who is particularly pertinent in exploring issues of representation through his theorizations for the discursive constitution of subjectivities. Many of the policymaking and by extension, social conflicts are according to Luke (1996;6) about representation and subjectivity. In particular,

In terms of representation, they involve the production and consumption of texts, access to and legal control over texts, and the rights to name, to construe, to depict and to describe. In terms of subjectivity, they involve how one is being named positioned, desired, and described and in which languages, texts and terms of reference (Luke1996; 6).

Identities and subject positions are primarily construed and conveyed through educational policy documents that set the discursive contours within which policy constitution and dissemination take place.

6.3 Principles and theoretical underpinnings of CDA

CDA is an heterogeneous and contested terrain whereby, as this happens with many processes of social science, there are no fixed precepts to determine the ways that it is perceived and employed. The essence of CDA centres upon the discursive linkage of the text with the social context, which is constituted by dynamic, ever-changing and multifariously interrelated forces. Having said that,

CDA takes the view that any text can be understood in different ways- a text does not uniquely determine a meaning, though there is a limit to what a text can mean: different understandings of the text result from different combinations of the properties of the text and the properties (social positioning, knowledges, values, etc.) of the interpreter (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999;67).

The question then is to put theory into practice and explicate the principles for engaging in CDA. It is self-evident that the principles outlined are merely indicative and not prescriptive, as they constitute the prelude to a critical endeavour predicated on a confluence of linguistic and social analysis.

CDA is thus oriented both to the structure (linguistic description) of the text, and the interactive processes of the text, which are related to the stages of interpretation and explanation, the latter stages offering an interdiscursive analytical insight into the micro/macro structures undergirding power relations. Fairclough (2001a;91) provides ten questions that the researcher should bear in mind in attempting to engage in the descriptive analysis of the text. These questions are oriented to the vocabulary, the grammar and the textual structures of the text. The analysis of the linguistic features of the text is, however, meaningless, unless it is placed within the discursively constituted social context, something that can be only achieved by the higher stages of analysis, namely interpretation and explanation.

Interpretation involves the analysis of the text in connection with its discursive context, and the common-sense assumptions within which the context is constituted. Interpretation, thus, is generated from the interactive amalgamation of the text and the “resources” that the interpreter brings to the situation. In other words, the interpreter encapsulates the “cues” of the text according to her “assumptive world” which is part of members’ resources, and provides a new version of the text. Members resources incorporate according to Fairclough (2001a;138) “the assumptions about culture, social relationships, and social identities...” Which are “seen as determined by particular power relations in society or institution, and in terms of their contribution to struggles to sustain or change these power relations...” The interpreter cannot uncover members’ resources unless she draws upon her own resources.

A crucial step of interpretation, however, is not only to draw upon a particular discourse, but also to draw upon the intertextual context within which the text is embedded. The discursive framework to draw upon is thus not arbitrarily constituted, but emanates from a context specific and historically situated discursive frame of reference. As Fairclough (2001a;127) contends:

Discourses and the texts which occur within them have histories, they belong to a historical series, and the interpretation of intertextual context is matter of deciding which series a text belong to, and therefore what can be taken as common ground for participants, or *presupposed* (emphasis in original).

Nevertheless, the textual version emanating from interpretation remains incomplete, unless the relations of power and domination, along with the social struggles inherent in them, are uncovered and explicated. The essence of CDA is predicated on the fact that the presuppositions that underlie the intertextual context might also have ideological functions, in the sense that they exert power in multifarious, yet occasionally opaque ways. What is ultimately needed, therefore, is explanation, which has the potential to provide a discursively constructed version of the text. Explanation is concerned with the ways that the linguistic character of the text is dynamically interlinked with power and the discursive context of the struggles within which it is embedded (Fairclough 2001a), an issue that occasionally remains unspoken within the text and it is admittedly, very difficult to grasp.

Explanation establishes the links between discourse and social structures, and portrays the ways that reciprocal links are mediated by members' resources. Everything is placed within an interactive network, which centres upon the members' resources and the social struggles and power relations that are inherent in them. That is, members' resources affect the construction of certain discourses which have the potential to either sustain or change social structure, whilst concomitantly social structures shape members' resources, which in turn shape discourses. Within the interplay of power, social actors' can wield power in shaping social structures, but are simultaneously subjected to these structures within the incessant interplay of power relations. The ultimate aim then, is to explicate the "determinants and effects of discourse at the institutional and societal levels" (Fairclough 2001;137), thus bringing to the surface the power relations and social struggles implicated therein.

6.4 Criticisms of CDA-Issues of reliability and validity

CDA is criticized on the grounds that it merely constitutes an ideological interpretation and not an analysis. An ideological representation entails a biased and a selective interpretation of the text, which emanates from a preferable standpoint

(Widdowson 1995; Wood and Kroger 2000). Similarly, Schegloff (1999) argues that CDA entails potential and actual bias in the sense that the analysis is pre-determined by the researcher (cited in Wetherell 2001). What is argued, therefore, is that the researcher's assumptive world is not only intertwined with the authors' and interviewees' assumptive words, but it also supersedes their assumptive worlds, thus leading to a biased version of "discursive reality". Thus, whilst using CDA to divulge the subtle interrelations of power, the researcher is, paradoxically, implicated in exactly the same power relations he/she aims to disentangle, and becomes an integral constituent of them. Reiterating, Blommaert (2005:33) "Less than careful CDA may thus result, not in an empowered subject speaking with a more audible voice, but a stentorian analyst voice".

Fairclough (1996) in defence to CDA, focuses on the fact that the principles upon which CDA is predicated call for multiple interpretations and similarly, Kress (1991:85) points out the fact that the advocates of CDA acknowledge and consider unproblematic the fact that it is a political and therefore, a "potentially contentious activity". Simultaneously, CDA is an approach that unambiguously states its orientation and commitment (Titscher et al 2000; Kress 1991). Reiterating Van Dijk (1993:252):

Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit socio-political stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large. Although not in each stage of theory formation and analysis, their work is admittedly and ultimately political.... Their perspective, if possible, is that of those who suffer most from dominance and inequality.... (Cited in Wetherell 2001:383).

Obviously CDA is in alignment, if not emanating from, a post-modern approach whereby reality is context and historically specific and therefore, subjected to contingent and not to absolutistic interpretations. Social reality is thus regarded as being incessantly reformulated by the elements of the "ideological complex", which "come to be structured and restructured, articulated and rearticulated, in processes of ideological struggle" (Gramsci 1971:195 cited in Fairclough 1999:76).

In much the same way Bowe et al (1992:22), contend that " Practitioners do not confront policy texts as passive readers, they come with histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of

policy...” Failure to recognise these elements in relation to CDA, might constitute an important source of bias, which therefore, needs to be critically examined.

It should be noted, however, that despite the fact that the conventional modes of validity and reliability cannot be applied in CDA, there are other issues that the analyst should bear in mind in order to ensure the warrantability and soundness of her endeavour. In other words, it is important “to show that our analyses are “sound; well grounded on principles or evidence; able to withstand criticism and objection”, “effective, effectual, cogent” (Webster’s 1976;217 cited in Wood and Kroger 2000;167) or that they are “based on evidence that can be supported; acceptable, convincing”, “properly derived from accepted premises by the rules of logic” (Funk and Wagnall 1974;1479 cited in Wood and Kroger 2000;167). Thus the researcher builds her arguments in coherent and clarified ways, thus explicating how the discourse is constituted and “how discursive structure produces effects and functions” (Wood and Kroger 2000;172), particularly in previously unnoticed and nebulous situations.

6.5 Putting critical discourse analysis into practice; some critical considerations

Despite the fact that some of the main principles upon which CDA is predicated have been already discussed, the non-exhaustive and hence, critical nature of this kind of research tool, make it necessary to provide some more details regarding its practical use, as well as its practical implications. This has been considered important in order to consolidate and make even more transparent its rationale and practical ways of deployment.

CDA as has been already discussed, seeks to investigate the ways that language functions as an element in social processes and further, to establish the links that exist between language and other elements of these processes. CDA thus focuses both on action and structure, in the sense that the aim is to investigate the reciprocal relationship between “micro” events and “macro” structures, thus eschewing as Fairclough contends (1985;740) “rigid barriers between the study of the “micro” (of

which the study of discourse is a part) and the study of the “macro”. Ultimately, given the fact that CDA has an emancipatory “knowledge interest”, it also seeks to proceed to progressive social change (Habermas 1971 cited in Fairclough 2001a;230). As Kress (1990; 85) contends: “ ...critical discourse analysts hope to bring about change not only to the discursive practices, but also to the socio-political practices and structures supporting the discursive practices”.

For instance, as far as special education is concerned, it is useful to reiterate that the aim is to identify the ways that the marginalisation and disparagement of disabled children is evinced within the various facets of policymaking, which are constituted by the interplay of unequal power relations. Critical discourse analysis has the potential to give us an important insight into the opaque ways that unequal power relations lead to the disempowerment of disabled people. The dominance of the discourse of “normalization” and “ the rule of homogeneity” along with the construction of “hierarchies, hyponimic relations” (Foucault 1979;183 cited in Luke1996;36), lead to the iniquitous demotion, or even “disappearance”, of disabled children’s “subject positions”. As Luke (1996:36) writes: “ The gaze of authority, discipline and power marks out the same children as different, as deficit, as objects of the official knowledges and human silences of policing, education, and welfare”.

The corrosive attributes of power and their multiple representations within social processes, can begin to be expunged when they are revealed and critically exposed through the “textual work of representing, relating, identifying and valuing”(Fairclough 2001a;241). Simultaneously, this attempt will be supplemented by identifying the hidden forces and the “ epistemological and political possibilities and alternatives” (Luke1996;7) that have the potential to change the situation for the future, that is to achieve the realisation of an inclusive discourse.

Special education, as part of social life, is fraught with hegemonic struggles that inform its philosophical tenets and practices. These hegemonic struggles constitute the various discourses as they are represented and materialised by different social actors. CDA is directed to the ways that these discourses are represented within social processes or within certain documents and the impact these might have on the problem under inquiry. In particular the analyst should primarily focus on a social

problem which might be rooted either “in the activities of a social practice, - in the social practice per se, or in the representation of social practice” (Fairclough 2001a;236) An example would be to expose the ways that certain institutionalised practices marginalize disabled people, or to address the problem of representation, that is, to expose the ways that disabled people are misrepresented either within policy documents or by different powerful social actors.

Representation is a key concept in the constitution of discourse and by implication, in the conceptualisation and formation of special education policy. As Romer et al (2002;14) write “ The making of disability policy is particularly complex because it incorporates social views, knowledge as well as misconceptions about how people become disabled, and the issue of societal responsibility for their well being” (cited in Morton and Gibson 2003;1). Not, surprisingly then, many of the policymaking and by extension, social conflicts are according to Luke (1996;6) about representation and subjectivity. .

In order to achieve the aforesaid aims, it is thereby crucial to move beyond the structure of the discourse and expose the interactional aspects of discourse that is to achieve interdiscursive analysis through the reciprocal relation between micro events and macro structures. As Fairclough (2001b;241) contends interdiscursive analysis works:

both paradigmatically in identifying which genres and discourses are drawn upon in a text, and syntagmatically in analysing how they are worked together through the text. The working assumption is that texts mix both different genres and different discourses....

Thus, moving beyond the ways that “ a text hold together to produce its own local network”, it will be more possible to identify the “ incompletions, gaps, paradoxes and contradictions in the text” (ibid;239), and explicate how they are linked to the wider interactive network of social processes.

Within the aforesaid process it is also important to identify those who have vested interests “ in the problem not being resolved” (Fairclough 2001b;236) or those whose material interests are served by the texts (Luke 1996:20). Going even further, Fairclough (2001c;128) proposes the adoption of three interconnected analytical

concerns, namely dominance, difference and resistance. It is thus initially important to identify the dominant discourses that imbue the text, and then to consider the range of difference and diversity of these discourses, whilst identifying the social structuring and restructuring of that difference. Finally, it is useful to expose the ways that the less dominant discourses are affected by the imposition of the new dominant ones. An example of these considerations, would be to bring to the surface the representations of the “new global economy” and the discourse that emanate from them, which according to Fairclough (2001c;130) “ ‘ flow’ through the transnational business-government network, and are recontextualised (and, as the concept entails, transformed) from genre to genre, from one domain of discourse to another”. The analysis of discursive “agonism” (Foucault cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982) undergirding special educational policymaking is a necessary task if we are to more effectively expose the subjugating effects of power, its corrosive and deleterious effect on the pursuit of an inclusive discourse.

6.6 Conclusions

Truth is an elusive notion that dwindles to insignificance unless examined in conjunction with the ways that it is produced, disseminated and sustained. A regime of truth is interweaved with overt and covert relations of power that are constituted within a specific socio-historical context. The attempt is to “uncover today’s discourse” and interrogate the ways that truth and thereby subjectivity are constituted within the “ implicit systems” (Foucault 1989a;63 cited in Blades 1997;95) of those who are institutionally empowered to produce and circulate their own “regimes of truth” through the official discourses of the state. The aim is to grasp the convoluted relations between “ the micropolitics of everyday texts and the macropolitical landscape of ideological forces and power relations, capital exchange, and material historical conditions” (Luke2002;100).

Special education policymaking is inevitably implicated within this complicated network of power relations whereby disabled children are subjugated to the “ ‘normalising judgement’ or “normalisation” inherent in the function of the modern disciplinary power (Foucault 1977;53). Power and knowledge become indispensable

and constitute the dominant discourses of those who are at the centre of policymaking struggles.

The methodology adopted aims to interrogate the constitution of “truth” in the Cyprus special education policymaking context. Power and the discursive constitution of reality emanating from it, are placed at the centre of this analytical and critical process. The utilisation of historical and sociological tools has the potential to deconstruct and expose the discourses through which special education is constructed, circulated and sustained. Simultaneously and most importantly, the utilization of these tools, has the potential to interrogate the kinds of knowledge implicated in the constitution of the dominant discourses that ostensibly seem “neutral” or “natural”, despite their pervasive and encroaching influence on the ways that special education is perceived and constructed.

Educational change and inclusive education can be achieved only when we make transparent “those systems” in which we “are trapped” (Foucault 1989a;64 cited in Blades 1997;95). Transcending the boundaries of traditional analytical tools, we are enabled to understand reiterating Luke (2002;99):

the centrality of language, text and discourse in the constitution of not just human subjectivity and social relations, but also social control and surveillance, the governance of polity and nation -state, and attendant modes of domination and marginalisation...

Understandably, these issues are central to the aims of this research, which seek to transcend the dominant assumptions and conceptions of special education thinking and make explicit the reasons why the quest for the realisation of an inclusive discourse is indeed “a difficult and disturbing task” (Barton 1987;232).

Having established and explicated the rationale of the methodological trajectory deployed an attempt will be made to divulge and shed more light on the prevalent discursive realities that constitute special education policymaking. In the following chapter, Critical Discourse Analysis penetrates the compilation of official documents, and analyses them against the wider spatial and chronological context of their production. In so doing, the aim is to provide an alternative to the conventional modes of analysis and unveil the fine meshes of power that colluded to their production.

Simultaneously, CDA utilizes documents as the final products that reflect the prevalent discourses upon which the knowledge basis of special education policymaking is predicated.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Critical discourse analysis and special education documents

Introduction

Having identified a range of documents relating to Special Education policy and practice, it is interesting to examine the ways that the education of disabled children is represented and envisioned in these documents. Administrative records according to Scott (1990;60) “are not and never were, merely natural reports of events. They are shaped by the political context in which they are produced and by the cultural and ideological assumptions that lie behind it”.

Policymakers are “endowed” with the institutional power and thereby, have the preferential access to political decision-making discourse, which is relayed through these documents. Reiterating Scott (1990; 58) once more: “Many of the most important public documents form a part of a system of surveillance and social control that have become such an integral part of bureaucratic nation states” As a result, policymakers attempt to gain control of the education system at large, as they are empowered to instil their own ideologies, prejudices and stereotypes. Simultaneously, the variety of the documents compiled, will make it possible to explore the ways that the less powerful groups, for instance the various parents’ associations, try to have access to the dominant discourses (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996) and spell out their opposition to the “encroaching power of the State” (McCulloch 2004;12) and the prevalent discourses emanating from the government policymaking arena.

Policymakers’ “will to truth” is constituted and reconstituted within a context of immense “discursive agonism” within “a play of non egalitarian and mobile relations”. Foucault is not only concerned with power, but he is also concerned with the omnipresence of different loci of resistance. As he poignantly puts it: “Where there is power, there is resistance and yet or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault cited in Thompson 2003; 117-118). A duty of the analyst is therefore, to “describe the way in which resistance operates as a part of power....” (Foucault cited in Kendal and Wickham

1999; 51) thereby depicting the historicized and contextualized “non egalitarian relations” that render special educational policymaking an essentially political process. Part of the critical endeavour, undertaken should, therefore, be an attempt to crystallize and expose the loci of resistance counterposed to the authoritative discourses that held sway over the discursive constitution of special education policymaking.

7.1 The interplay of domination

As matters currently stand, special education and the future of disabled children is not considered as a matter of priority within the Cyprus official policymaking arena, despite the pious proclamations of the government that is supposed to be working towards the realisation of progressive and “inclusive” special education policies. The subordination and marginalization of supposedly “deviant groups”, either in terms of ethnicity, sexuality or disability starts from the higher level of educational policymaking and inevitably, “flows” unencumbered throughout the institutional and ideological edifice of the whole Cyprus society. By no means, however, is the “flow” a mono-dimensional process. Rather, it constitutes a reciprocal process within an intricately entwined network of micro and macro dynamics emanating from all arenas of educational policymaking. The ideological predispositions undergirding the deepest recesses of the Cyprus social edifice is similarly not conducive to the realisation of an inclusive discourse.

In the following section I will attempt to highlight key aspects of the multifaceted struggles that characterize special educational policymaking in the Cyprus context and pinpoint the loci of resistance to the authoritative discourses influencing the special education policymaking process. At first, I will provide some historical insights into the ideological platforms upon which special education has been predicated and the ensuing struggles over policy formulation and implementation. This kind of approach is the trajectory perspective in policy analysis (Ball 1997) that, amongst other things, is concerned with the evolution of policies over time and space and the ways that the constellation of policy dynamics are interrelated, intertwined and infiltrated in this process.

Simultaneously, I will attempt to show the ways that language and the discursive reality emanating from it constitute a pervasive means of exclusion and disparagement for disabled children and their advocates. This is followed by an analysis of the ways that parents, within the interplay of unequal power relations, attempt to “gain” access and counteract the dominant discourse. Finally, the endeavour will be to make transparent the ambivalent nature of State Policy and its impact on the implementation process, notwithstanding the “textual manoeuvres that give a gloss of coherence, consensus and commonsense in a collection of mutually contradictory educational fantasies” (McLure 1994;285).

In particular, through the critical examination of the different documents it will be possible to address the following questions that can potentially divulge the emergence and evolution of “today’s discourse” in Cyprus special education policymaking context and make transparent the power/knowledge grid that has historically impacted on the constitution of this particular discourse.

- a) What are the dominant discourses that underpin the education of disabled children?
- b) In what ways do the less powerful social actors attempt to gain access to the dominant discourses?
- c) What are the criticisms regarding the current special education legislative framework as well as relevant current practice?

7.2 Documentary analysis and the evolution of Special education

In the following account an attempt will be made to provide a historical analysis of the prevalent “regimes of truth” that shaped special education policymaking in the Cyprus context, as they are evinced in the various documents compiled. The documents reflect two different discursive realities that have prevailed within the Cyprus policymaking landscape. The transition period has been characterised by intense negotiations or as otherwise stated, by “crises” and “settlements” whereby powerful social actors vied to impose their own “will to truth” according to their beliefs and their vested interests. The voting of the 1999 Special Education Act has shown, however, that there is not such a thing as a “settlement” in educational

policymaking. Rather, policymaking is an ever-changing discursive assemblage of contesting and unequal power relations subjected to incessant reconfiguration and reconstitution. Hence, the introduction of the new Law has been the harbinger of a new cycle of negotiations and intense “discursive agonism” thereby vindicating the contention that educational policymaking is indeed an ongoing, precarious and difficult to depict process.

The official concern for the education of disabled children started in 1978, four years after the debilitating consequences of the Turkish invasion in Cyprus. The first official discussion in the Cyprus parliament, as one of the summaries of the parliamentary minutes of that period suggests, took place on the 21st December 1978. The discussion concentrated on the first special education White Paper that led to the voting of the 1979 Special Education Act.

Notwithstanding the fact that the concerns expressed regarding disabled children, were starkly segregating in nature, the parliamentary discussion was an important step forward. This is because for the first time there had been an official proposal that the education of disabled children should be brought into the aegis of the government, in much the same way as the education of non-disabled children always was. As the following quotation from the minutes (21st December 1978) suggests:

Special education is not currently completely provided by the government. Thus, the White Paper under discussion, lays the foundations for the gradual arrangement of the problem in both administrative and financial terms (p.1).

In homologous fashion, the report of the Educational Committee of the Parliament (1978) indicates the necessity that the government should undertake the full responsibility of the functioning of special schools.

The Ministry of Education has responded to the urging of the committee and submitted a detailed note which analysed the current problem regarding the **backward**, the measures that have been taken so far, so as the various special schools that currently function, with the initiatives of the private sector and especially the parents, to become under the auspices of the state (p.1) (my emphasis).

What is striking, however, in this official document, besides the concern to provide a legal basis for the function of special schools, is the use of a very offensive word for

disabled children (**kathysterhmena-backward** [children]). Even worse, the noun “children” is not used in the document. The adjective is simply used as a noun and therefore the attribute of disabled children is limited to the insulting term, as no reference is made to them as also being children- **kathysterhmena paidia**) Nowadays this is considered an insulting word (both as an adjective and noun) and is no longer used. I was curious to see if the same word is used in the 1979 act. Notwithstanding the use of a different word, the meaning of it was similar, albeit a bit less insulting (*askisima*).

Given the fact that “there is no such thing as an innocent reading” (Slee 2001c;114), the language used reflects the disparaging ways that disabled children were regarded. It is no wonder, then, that more than two decades after this report, the well-entrenched diminution of disabled people is still evident. As matters currently stand, people still find it difficult to accept disabled people as ordinary human beings. However sad this may sound, it will really need time to remove “bad mouthing” (Corbett 1996) and its interrelated deep-seated prejudice that poses great impediments to the realisation of an inclusive discourse within the Cypriot schools and the society in general.

The Special Education Act of 1979 (N.47/1979) is the result and simultaneously reflects the philosophy of the period. The “individualistic gaze” concentrates on disabled children’s “deficiencies” as well as their “deviation” from an arbitrary constructed notion of normality. The idea is clear and explicitly articulated: disabled children should be segregated and incarcerated in special schools because they are “less than normal”, according to the expert opinion of those who “know best”. The prevalence of the medical model of disability leaves no space for other considerations under the pressure of the scientific “regimes of truth”. As we read in the minutes of a discussion of the Educational Committee of the parliament regarding the parliamentary discussions on the White Papers prior to the 1979 Act:

Analysing the provisions of the White Paper under discussion, Mr.....said that the White paper adopts the most **prevalent scientific methods of categorization of “intellectual delay”** of these children for the adoption of which we took into consideration the opinions of all participants. (Parliamentary minutes regarding the Education of Disabled children White Paper of 1978: 2) [my emphasis].

The whole document is fraught with essentialist perspectives of individual pathology. Disabled children and their “deficits” should be “treated” within segregated schools, in segregated procedures and by specialists. The technologies of power both construe and manipulate the deviant subject through the institutional legitimised disciplinary technologies of normalisation (Foucault 1977).

Given these considerations, the document further suggests that there should be created a separate department of special education within the Ministry in order to tackle effectively the problems of special schools. Moreover, it was indicated the necessity to create a separate school to educate “specialized” teachers. As the following quotation reads:

The government should consider the creation of an institution for the education of teachers for special education subjects, something....that is absolutely necessary for the successful implementation of the Law (1978;3).

The document reflects a deeply entrenched professionalism. Professionals are given excellent credentials in their ability to handle the “deviants” in “scientific” ways. Ordinary teachers are not deemed capable of handling these pupils and therefore the special teacher came into being. The vectors of power/knowledge prevailing at the time hatched the “new” professional who was given all the credentials to handle and “normalise” the “deviant”.

Professionals are, thus, statutorily and institutionally empowered to impose their “will to truth” through the ritualised processes of identification and assessment, which are very carefully described and explicated throughout the legislative document. As Morton and Gipson (2003;10) so pertinently write: “This makes the professional the expert, with great authority to pronounce upon the individual, the client. These roles are seen as the natural state of affairs”. Scientific expertise legitimises their hegemonic role and perpetuates the relations of domination. The overall aim as stated in the document is the “welfare and rehabilitation” (p.75) of disabled children. The word “welfare” implies “children’s best interests” and is used to mask and embellish the arbitrary and destructive “rehabilitation” processes emanating from the “ideology of expertise” (Fulcher 1996;42), which aims at the adaptation and normalization of those deemed to be “deviant”.

7.3 The new legislation and the struggles that preceded it

Educational policymaking is characterised by incessant struggles that are interlinked with economic, ideological, political and social considerations (Barton and Tomlinson 1982; Fulcher 1989). What follows is an attempt to provide an analysis of the changing role of ideology, politics, economics and interests groups in the 1999 policymaking formulation process. In so doing it will be possible to gain some insight into the power struggles or the “hard bargaining” of the various social actors with differing objectives and unequal power relations (Drake1999;23), that had officially taken place eight years prior to the voting of the 1999 Law. Put differently, the attempt would be to expose through the utilization of both historical and sociological tools the “relationships between interest groups; in seeing who impacted on whom and with what effect; in identifying those who made the decisions; in short the process of policy formulation” (Kogan 1975;21).

This will be achieved by analysing of the documents obtained through the archive of the Ministry of Education and the Parliament. Of crucial importance are also the White Papers that were presented to the parliament for discussion between the years 1995-1999. The incessant alterations of the Papers reflect the struggles embroiled in the policymaking process as well as the changes of the ideological platforms of those who have been at the forefront of this process.

The voting of the new legislation in 1999 was the result of a string of negotiations that were gestating since 1991, when the government appointed a special committee in order to examine the general framework of the education of children with special needs and submit suggestions for its improvement. President of the committee assigned, was John Constantinides, an attorney of the supreme-court. A letter sent to him by the Ministry of Education on the 25th January 1991 explicated the reasons and simultaneously mirrored the philosophy that necessitated the constitution of the committee:

The necessity for the revision of special education framework, is considered necessary after the enactment of the 1989 Law for the intellectually backward [sic] people (117/89 Law)...The Law stipulates that the needs of this category of people is tackled as a matter of priority within the economic potentials of the state. The responsibility for the allocation of chances for education is not exhausted to the creation of special schools only. The need is wider and extends in every sector of learning, so as these people to be enabled to utilise to the greatest possible extent their intellectual potentials...(1991;.1).

The committee worked for almost two years and prepared the so-called Constantinides Report (1992) upon which the new legislation was supposed to be based. As it indicated within the Summary of the report regarding the framework of the proposed legislation:

The 1979 Law (47/79) has been a landmark in the evolution of Special Education in Cyprus. The responsibilities of the state towards disabled children have been institutionalised and given circumstances of that era, the foundations for a new start were laid. Thirteen years after the voting of that Law, new conceptions have emerged and contemporary trends are adopted by all the education systems (p.1).

Thus among the suggestions made by the committee in order to reshuffle the education system were the following:

- The integration of legislative stipulations of special education to the general educational legislation
- Expansion of special education for the children above the age of eighteen and under the age of five.
- Institutionalisation of the state's responsibility for:
 - Definition of mechanisms for the early identification of children
 - Scientific assessment of each child
- The ordinary school is the natural place of education and the withdrawal of children from it should be done with well-defined stipulations (p.2).

The suggestions of the Constantinides Report (1992) gave the impulse and indicated the imperative need to radically amend and modernize the existing legislative framework. The first attempts for the creation of a framework for the new legislation were made in 1994 whereby a legislative team within the Ministry of Education and Culture prepared a draft plan for the new legislation. There was a virulent criticism regarding the stipulations of the draft plan, as it was incompatible with the suggestions of the Constantinides report. The association of educational

psychologists, starkly influenced by the international philosophical trends and in particular, by a programme of the European Union, noted the following:

The proposed Law is immensely segregating and consists regression even in relation to the existing Law of 1979, which is supposed to modernise. The conceptual content and the way of organization of special education depicted within the White paper are characteristics of “policy” at the start of our century... The draft plan puts great emphasis on the allocation of special education in specialist places whilst the avowed integration policy of the Ministry of Education is neglected. Reference is made not only to entirely segregated places but also in schools that specialise in particular aspects of disability (e.g moderate intellectual disability, severe emotional problems etc) Such a kind of segregation and categorization collide with the contemporary conceptions of the EU.... (Archive No. 115/77, 18th May 1994; 4 -5).

Similarly, the Pancyprian Organization of Parents of Disabled Children, characterizes the draft as unacceptable because for instance, it categorizes and institutionalises children whilst simultaneously it undermines the role of the parents, in the sense that parents are presented to have only obligations and not any rights regarding the education of their children. Moreover, they commented that even the creation of a separate Legislation for disabled children, came in direct opposition with the suggestions Constantinides Report. Similar views were expressed by the Association of Parents of Deaf children who, in a letter sent to the General director of the Ministry of Education on the 31st May 1994, expressed the hope that they would have been invited in the following meeting regarding the revision of the draft plan in order to express their views.

It needs noting however, that in certain cases criticism was starkly instigated by vested interests and not from benign concern for disabled children. For, instance the association of educational psychologists criticized the White Paper because it gave great power to a single person the so-called “Superior” (Proistamenos) and therefore, they demanded “devolution of power”. What they actually claimed, however, was their own ascendant role within the various decision-making processes. As they write:

The proposed “ Inter-sector Special Education Service” constitutes and hydrocephalous, over-centralised, bureaucratic mechanism that will be administered by the Superior who concentrates ALL the powers; administrating, scientific, pedagogic. The extent of the over-power concentrated in one and only person is depicted by the fact that the word Superior is presented 34 times within the text of the White paper. On the contrary, the contribution of the other specialists, educational psychologists and special therapists is provocatively subordinated, as they are not even named....(1994;6) (emphasis in original).

Educational psychologists obliquely, albeit poignantly, attempt to ascertain their own hegemonic role within the various procedures. Behind their concern for devolution of power lies their prodigious desire to secure their vested interests and establish greater domination. The same applies for the Association of Clinical Psychologists that sent a similar letter and corroborated the previously expressed position.

Bearing in mind Tomlinson's (1985;160) contention that: "Indeed an understanding of the competition and alliances among interest groups in special education is crucial to understanding its expansion", it is interesting to note that the psychologists' vested interests are also evinced in another document regarding a later White Paper. In that case they explicitly demanded that the educational psychologists assigned in the Assessment Committee should have been from the "**public sector**", a clarification that was later included in the stipulations of the Law. Evidently, educational psychologist's claims for "devolution of power" were congruent only to the extent that their vested interests remained untouched. Therefore, it was crucial to ensure that other psychologists working in the **private sector** were statutorily encumbered to "usurp" their own hard to gain ascendant role in the decision-making processes. What has just been described constitutes another vivid example of the hypertrophy of the public and governmental sector in Cyprus (Mavratsas 2003) and the concomitant subordination and disempowerment of the private sector, something that still, bears a profound and an adversary impact on the attempts to establish greater democratic processes and procedures in the island.

Another intervention starkly instigated by vested interests, is evinced within a letter sent to the Ministry of Education by the general director of the Ministry of Finance on the 21st October 1994, who expressed the following views regarding the draft White Paper:

We particularly believe that there should not have been a separate Law for the education of disabled children, but as it is suggested in the special document of the committee: "Special schools should be integrated in the common educational sector within the frame of a unified educational legislation". Finally, I would like to stress that the Ministry of Finance is opposed to the creation of a new structure at the Ministry of Education for Special Education, because we believe that with the modernization of the existing ways of handling issues of special education, the gaps identified will be covered (p.1).

Even though it cannot be argued that the integrative attempts in Cyprus took place as a “saving money exercise”, the proposed integrative arrangements were, nevertheless, in alignment with the economic interests of the State. By no means had the general director of Ministry of Finance expressed a view in favour of “children’s interests”, unless these interests were congruent with the economic interests of the state.

After the criticisms that the draft White Paper received, the Committee continued its work for its improvement and issued the first official White Paper. The Ministry of Education in a document dated 10th February 1995 commented on the improvements introduced in the new White Paper and simultaneously, referred to the conflicts and the problems that the multiple and contradictory values of the interests group pose on the formation process. In particular it is stated that:

...whilst attempting to compromise the contradictory positions and views of the interested parties, there are disagreements on some articles of the White Paper, especially by parents who insist on the rightness of their views, something that renders its promotion to the parliament for acceptance, problematic....(p.1).

Amongst the most important stipulations of the Paper was the expansion of the definition of “special needs children” and the de-categorization of the children. The most important stipulation, however, was the provision that the education of disabled children will start from birth until the age of 18 (MEC 1995).

The Paper has since then been subjected to constant alterations, the most interesting of which was the age of the children that the state was responsible for their education. Economic considerations played a crucial role in the alterations. Disabled children’s best interests were in this case easily sidestepped because they colluded with the economic concerns of the State. As it is indicated in the report issued by the Committee of Ministries regarding the White paper of 1995:

During the examination of the 1995 White Paper we submitted various suggestions for its alteration, which basically were intended to the formulation of an easy to implement policy and to render the Paper **financially feasible and flexible** (Committee of the Ministers 21.06.95) [my emphasis].

The economic considerations and the pressures that powerful social actors within the government exerted, led to the modifications and the creation of the 1997 White Paper

whereby the state assumed responsible for the education of disabled children at the age of three and not earlier.

Interestingly, there were even further speculations to limit the responsibility of the state at the age of six, something that is indicative of the fact that the education of disabled children was steadfastly driven by other than educational considerations. According to a report issued by the Planning Office and the Public Administration Service and Personnel:

The issue of the legislative endorsement of pre-school education should be examined, because it will **create great demands and will immensely increase the cost of the allocation of services**. For this reason the Ministry [of Finance] should assess **the preliminary cost of implementing the allocation of special education to pre-school children**, before this is inserted as an organised programme and covered by the legislation. (1997;1) [my emphasis].

As a result of the abovementioned speculations, it was eventually decided that the responsibility of state for the education of disabled children, should have started at the age of 6. Thus, the White Paper of 1998, which was prepared by the government and submitted to the parliament, stipulated that: “ ‘Child’ means child after the completion of his/her enrolment in the primary school [at the age of six] until the completion of the age of eighteen” (p. 2) Moreover, the stipulation regarding the allocation of pre-school education was deleted.

There was an implacable opposition to the proposed stipulations of the 1998 White Paper and it was characterised as utterly unacceptable. For instance, the Association for the Protection of Intellectually Disabled People sent a letter to the President of the Parliament on the 30th April 1998 in order to protest against the particular stipulations of the Paper. The Association used the declarations of supranational organizations in order to wield power to the government with the aim to reinstate the basic right of disabled children for a proper education. As the quotation reads:

...the deletion of all the stipulations related with the allocation of education from the age of three to six is unacceptable. The early allocation of special education to the children with intellectual disabilities is a serious and necessary responsibility of the State, because it aims to the decrease the degree of disability at a later stage...Whatever alterations of the Paper regarding the early intervention for short-term financial considerations will lead to long term adverse consequences when these people will grow up and will need greater dependence from the provisions of the State. Our position is supported by the Rules of the UN, the declarations of UNESCO and the European Committee for equal opportunities of learning and the European Possession that we are obliged to parallel. The committee condemns any decisions

that lead to regression and it assures you that it will struggle in every way to bring the Paper back to its initial provisions (p.1).

Eventually, the pressures exerted by the various social actors outside the governmental terrain, forced the parliament to re-introduce and include in the new legislation the stipulation according to which the responsibility of the government for the education of disabled children starts at the age of three. Had it not been for the pressures exerted, financial considerations would have outweighed the official declarations of the government regarding the rights of disabled children to receive proper education. It also needs noting that implacable criticism towards the rather delayed intervention age have been also vociferously exerted by certain academics in the Educational Department of the University of Cyprus who tried variously and persistently to persuade the Government regarding the immense benefits of early intervention (see Diakidou and Phtiaka 1998).

The incessant modifications of the 1998 White Paper took place between the 9th of June 1998 and the 25th of May 1999. The Law was eventually voted on the 28th of July 1999 despite of the fact that some members of the parliament asked to postpone its voting. This was because it was thought that the Law should have been further subjected to scrutiny since some of its articles could have been better rearticulated. Other members however, rejected the suggestion pointing out the negative cost that a further delay would have on education indicating that the voting of the Law was a politically and ethically urgent issue (Summary of the parliamentary minutes, 28/07/1999).

7.4 The “linguistic surgery” towards a more inclusive lexicon; The case of the 1998 White Paper

In the following section I will attempt, to provide a more detailed, albeit brief, account of the linguistic amendments that took place to the White Paper of 1998 prior to the voting of the Law. The government sent the first draft White Paper of 1998 to the General Director of the Parliament on the 30th March 1998. The White Paper of 1998 has been discussed in the Educational Committee of the Parliament on several sittings and it has been subjected to constant alterations. Interestingly, the President of

the Parliamentary Committee gave me the first draft White Paper prepared by the Government as well as two other drafts, among which the final draft before the voting of the Law.

Not only does the existence of several discussions and alterations of the proposed policy document vindicate the metaphor of educational policymaking as a struggle, but it also makes transparent the pervasive impact that written policy is perceived to have on enacted policy. Written policy exerts a discursive “governmentability” (Foucault 1979,1994) over the context of implementation as it sets the discursive contours within which policy “contextualization” and “recontextualization” is taking place. The struggles towards the “negotiated single solution” in special education policymaking took place over the meaning of single words, thus indicating once more, that discourses are not only instantiated in texts (Janks 1997) but also in single words.

It is clearly evident, that the negotiations over the more recent White Paper were directed to the “linguistic surgery” (Slee 1993:353) of the text so as to incorporate a more inclusive lexicon and grandiose rhetoric in the stipulations of the prospective legislative document. Even though, however, the consecutive discussions over the last White Paper represent a linguistic and hence, a perceptual evolution towards more inclusive discourse, this evolution is not substantial in the sense that it is directed only to the “embellishment of the surface” and leaves many exclusionary linguistic “minefields”, which undermine the concerns for greater inclusion, unchallenged. This is something that will be discussed in the next section.

The first draft White Paper of 1998 prepared by the government and presented to the Parliament for discussion on the 9th June 1998 makes transparent policymakers’ perception regarding the distinctive and incompatible nature of the legislation intended for disabled children in relation to the one for general education. As it is written:

Because the aim regarding the integration of the stipulations for children with special needs in **a unified legislative framework is still not feasible**, the Parliament votes the following...(my emphasis)

In the next revised White Paper the above has been substituted by the following stipulation:

Because the Law is **part and completes the existing legislation** for general education the Parliament votes the following...(my emphasis)

What we can discern in the two quotations is the fact that policymakers, probably influenced by their increased knowledge acquired regarding inclusion, attempted to provide a more convincing rhetoric. Whilst they initially proclaimed the discrepancy and the irreconcilability between special and general policies they later advocated their convergence and interrelation, something that previously was declared as “not feasible”! In so doing, they also implicitly acknowledged the indisputable belonging of disabled children to the general school.

Their “perceptual shift” takes its definite form in the final official Law of 1999 whereby the previous sentence is again substituted by the concerns for the rights of disabled children as proclaimed by the international community. This constitutes a very important stipulation because it provides a robust and indisputable basis upon which the proper education of disabled children will be predicated. It is a substantial concern that gives more credence to the proposed legislation that is internationally defined and sanctioned as a product of a rights issue. Thus,

Because the rights of the children with special needs are safeguarded by the international proclamations and conventions sanctioned, the Parliament votes the following...

Another interesting stipulation that has also been included in the last White Paper and the final Law stipulates “the responsibility of the state starts since the birth of a disabled child”. This is, however, a paradoxical addition given the changes that the White Papers were subjected and the increase of the age of children that the state is responsible for. The added phrase in the preamble, which is later negated by another phrase that nominates the state responsible for the children **after the age of three**, is the following:

Because the state has responsibility for the children with special needs from **their birth** until their resettlement and the development of their abilities to the greater possible extent(Preamble)[my emphasis]

Presumably, the particular phrase has been added in order to add more pomposity to the governmental rhetoric regarding its concerns for disabled children. Simultaneously, it indicates in the best possible way the inconsistent, contradictory and perfunctory nature of the Law and the ways that rhetoric clashes with certain stipulations. For instance the abovementioned stipulation is immediately afterwards contradicted and negated by the definition given to the word “child” whereby the responsibility of the state starts for his/her education. Thus as indicated within the article 2 of the Law:

“child” means a person **from the age of three** until the completion of the education as this is indicated in the interpretation of the term “ Special education” [my emphasis].

Another stipulation that struck me is the definition of pre-primary education that is given in the last version of the draft White Paper, immediately before the voting of the Law. Pre-primary special education is defined as follows:

...means the education given from the state **to the parents of the children with special needs and to the children themselves** upon their completion of the age of three until their integration in the educational system so as to be developed in a way to be integrated in it. [my emphasis]

It is quite bizarre to observe that the quotation refers to the parents of the children and not to the children themselves. Undoubtedly, parents do need some kind of education, which, however, should have been expressed in a way not to subordinate the importance of children’s education. Otherwise, the individualism of children is annihilated and dwindles to nothing. Is this linguistic arrangement a coincidence or does it mirror a well-entrenched conception according to which disabled children are considered as dependent, not autonomous sub-creatures and entirely reliable on their parents? Whatever the answer is, the stipulation was later changed and priority was eventually given to the education of disabled children rather than their parents’. Thus, as we read in the Legislative document:

...means the education given from the state **to the children with special needs** upon their completion of the age of three until their integration in the education system so as to be developed in a way to be integrated in it, **and includes the education given to the parents of children with special needs....**(article 2.1)

Some other interesting changes that concern smaller phrases and words are the following. Notwithstanding the seemingly inconsequential nature of the linguistic changes occurred, it is important to reiterate, that even the tiniest utterance modification constitutes a pervasive technology of power embroiled in the struggles over the incessant constitution and reconstitution of special education “policyscapes” (Appadurai 1991 cited in Ball 1998a).

At the preamble of the Law, it is stated that the “ the **goal** of the State is the creation of the least restrictive environment”. The word “goal” has been later substituted by the word “**responsibility**”, which is a stronger and more persuasive word in terms of the “inclusive” rhetorical intentions of the State.

Moreover, the earliest draft White Paper states that: “special education means the allocation of **every possible** help for her [disabled child] **collective** development in all areas”. This is changed to “the allocation of **all the necessary** help for her **whole development...**” (Art. 2.1) The whole development is concerned not only with children’s “ **social inclusion and independent life**” but also with their “**school inclusion**”(2.1). Thus the changes are also directed to the academic development and thereby “participation” of disabled children in mainstream schools. Put differently, not only are the stipulations concerned with the integration of children in schools but also they are concerned with the functional integration of these children in mainstream settings.

In another instance, there are stipulations regarding the allocation of education within mainstream settings. Thus, “ A child with special needs for whom special education has been defined, attends a mainstream classroom of an ordinary school...” The statement is later completed by the phrase “...an ordinary school **equipped with the appropriate infrastructure...**” (3.1), thereby indicating the necessity to reshuffle and adapt classrooms and schools to the specific needs of disabled children. Simultaneously, however, it can be argued that the additional clause can be an inconspicuous way to exclude disabled children from mainstream classes when the “appropriate infrastructure” is presumably non-existent.

The fourth part of the Law and in particular article 6, is concerned with the establishment of identification mechanisms. Whilst previously this responsibility has been entirely placed on the Minister of Education, now it talks about the **cooperation with other engaging ministries**. The addition was necessary after the postponement of the Ministry's of Education responsibility for children at the age of three. Before that age the responsibility of children is into the aegis of the Ministry of Work and Labour.

By no means, however, does this stipulation imply any kind of devolution of power or an attempt to forge a new relation between the Ministries so as to better cater for the needs of disabled children. Rather, it is solely done in order to rhetorically cover the gap that has been created after the delayed responsibility assumed by the Ministry of Education. So patchy is that stipulation that no details are given regarding the ways that the mechanisms of identification are to be jointly established between the Ministries.

Another addition made that is quite positive, is the necessity to **create mechanisms for the information and support of the parents** (article 6). Parents are, thus, given the rights to be formally informed and supported throughout the processes of identification and assessment of their children. Moreover, adding an adjective in Article 8(1) reinforces the duty of the Committee for implementing the proper assessment procedures. Thus the sentence "The committee has the duty of assessment of the needs of the child" was changed to "The committee has the duty of **adequate** assessment of the needs of the child".

As far as the participation of the child is concerned it was initially stated: "The Committee, within the frame of the assessment procedure **has the potential** to send a written notification to parents asking for the presence of the child for examination" [Art. 11 (1)] In order to further ensure the participation of the child in the examination after the assessment the following modifications incurred: "The Committee, within the frame of the assessment procedure **is obliged** to send a written notification to parents asking for the presence of the child for examination **as well**"

Another modification of interest is the article 11 (2) that follows, and is concerned with the role of the parent in the decision-making procedures. At the initial version of the White Paper it was stated that: “The parent of the child whose needs are to be assessed in the potency of the present article, **has to conform and would have also the right** to be present in the examination.” Evidently, the right of parents to be present in the decision-making procedures is weakly articulated and it is further attenuated by the preceding clause concerned with the need for parental conformity. The sentence was later rearticulated in order to ensure the rights of parents in a more poignant and more explicit way. Moreover, the parent is allowed to take a specialist of their choice and most probably from the private sector in order to have a more substantial participation and intervention in the decision making process. Thus, “ The parent of the child **has the right** to be present during the assessment by **himself or with a specialist on the particular issue**, to be involved and bring information and suggestions germane to the assessment”.

Last but not least, it is interesting to refer to another linguistic amendment. This is concerned with the Greek phraseology of “**Special Education**” that is widespread within the document. In order to make explicit the amendment made, I need to translate the exact term that has been initially used in the documents. The term initially used was “**Eidiki Agwgi**” and was later transformed to “**Eidiki Agwgi kai Ekpaideysi**”. For the first word I could not find the English equivalent that conveys its exact meaning and indicates its differentiation from the word “**Ekpaideysi Education**”. Therefore, in order to explain the subject positions conveyed through the selection of particular words over others, it is necessary, in this occasion, to use the Greek word “**agwgi**” and the meaning attributed to it.

The addition incurred is linguistically significant as the word “agwgi” in Greek pedagogy is more related to the shaping of the soul of the student thereby implying more the behavioural and attitudinal normalization of the “deviant”. This is not surprising if we consider another derivative of the verb “agw”, namely the word “diagwgi”(διαγωγή) that means the behaviour of a person. The word “education” implies a more extended scope and a higher level of acquired knowledge, in sharp contrast with the word “agwgi” that is concerned with the narrow “soul moulding” pedagogical procedure.

These are but a few examples of the struggles over meaning as they are evinced within the three draft White Papers. Despite, however, the linguistic amendments the Law is still significantly informed by the anachronistic discourses of functional thought that impede the attempts for the effective realisation of inclusion. The linguistic changes attempted were not substantial and the exclusionary language of individual pathology still reigns, albeit in more unobtrusive ways, within the legislative document. The next section will concentrate on the current Law with the aim to divulge the power of language and by implication, the power of discourse to exclude in more subtle, but yet in equally corrosive ways.

7.5 Policy as discourse; The power to exclude.

In the following section the endeavour will be to explicate the ways that language and the discursive meaning that emanates from it act as impediments to change. The policy text is regarded as a conglomerate of discursive voices that have a significant bearing on the ways that the education of disabled children is constructed. The aim then is, using Bacchi's (2000;147) words, to divulge and explicate the ways that the attempts towards greater inclusion are encumbered by the "constraints imposed by discourse, through meaning construction".

The latest special education policy in Cyprus is supposed to represent a paradigm shift towards greater inclusion whereby the rights of disabled children are eagerly promulgated. The change in philosophy, as it has been previously evinced, is reflected within the various documents and particularly within the current Special Education Law. The argument, however, is that despite the praiseworthy rhetoric regarding the realisation of an inclusive discourse, there is not a "discursive homogeneity" within policy texts. Inclusive policy texts constitute a heterogeneous assemble of adversary discursive realities, in the sense that they merge variegated antithetical considerations and interests. The balance achieved is a precarious one and offers little other than an illusion of progress.

In the following lines I will attempt to present the discourses that inform the current 1999 Special Education Law (113 (I)) and the complementary N.69 (I) of 2001 Law, as well as the 2001 Regulations of the Law (186/2001).

The Articles 3 and 4 of the Law are fraught with what Slee (1996a) calls “clauses of conditionality” whereby the right of disabled children to be educated in their neighbourhood mainstream school is concomitantly disenfranchised by provisional and contingent statements resulting from unequal power relations. Institutionally empowered social actors “hide behind the clauses of conditionality (Slee 1996) in the legislation to provide forms of segregation” (Slee 2001a;389). The discretionary power statutorily assigned to them can legitimately construct “need” and “deficit” and unobtrusively debar disabled children from mainstream schools.

Thus, disabled children are educated in mainstream classes “unless in exceptional circumstances that according to the current Law is judged otherwise” (Article 3). Moreover in Article 4, even though it is initially stated that the education of disabled children is forbidden in “resource units in mainstream schools or in special school or elsewhere”, this is contingent to “the extent and the time the attendance in these [settings] is decided according to the stipulations of the current Law”. Paradoxically, the statement is followed by a definition of the special school, which in order to be considered as a place for the education of children should be “organised, well-appointed and well-equipped so as to ensure the allocation of special education defined “ (Article 4.3) Thus on the one hand it is stated that the education in special schools is forbidden and on the other hand a string of alternatives are enunciated whereby they overshadow the initial proclamations of the Law.

The differentiated subject positions of disabled children that distinguish them from their “normal” peers are clearly and repeatedly articulated within the policy document. This contention is inaugurated within the preamble of the document that is not only concerned with providing “*education*” to disabled children but also “*guidance*” and “*rehabilitation*” thereby denoting the presumable “defected” developmental trajectory of these children and the necessity to bring them into line with the preordained and authoritative construed scientific discourse of normality. It is also interesting to note that even the title of the document is concerned with the

education (ekpedeysi-εκπαίδευση) as well as “agwgi”(αγωγή) of the children. Bearing in mind that discourses are also instantiated in single words, it is clear that the focus on the linguistic predilections of the documents is crucial in attempting to unravel the micro-textual effects of the power/knowledge nexus that constitutes disabled children. Despite the fact that the word “education” has been added to the phraseology used to convey “Special Education” in the Cyprus legislation, it is still the case that the word “agwgi” precedes the word education. Thus, the concern is primarily on the “agwgi” of the “abnormal” individuals, rather on their “education” (ekpaideysi) that conveys the concerns over their academic participation and development within mainstream settings. The latter concerns are envisioned for the “docile bodies” (Foucault 1977), which allegedly possess the human capital to respond to the increased demands of schooling under the siege of the neo-liberal discourse. It can be thus argued, that the precedence and the use of the word “agwgi” insinuates the intention to “bring” disabled children into the regimes of the preordained normality envisioned by policymakers. As Foucault (1979a;194) contemplates on the disciplinary and normalizing technologies of power, “ Those who deviate must be brought into line, they must be disciplined, IQ-tested. The categories of the “deviant”, as well as the “normal” individual in this way are constructed”.

Interestingly, there is also a whole section that is entirely concerned with the function of special schools. Thus the contingent and provisional nature of the document is further corroborated by an extended and detailed depiction of the function of special schools. The Ministerial Committee is responsible to provide all the “scientific” credentials for the proper function of special schools. It is thus concerned with the “recruitment of the necessary scientific personnel” and the “necessary scientific services” (17.a, 17.b). The prescriptions of the functional thought are re-deployed as a potent means to normalise the “defective” children through their incarceration in segregating rehabilitation schools, despite the avowed initial proclamations of the Law.

The document is further concerned with the responsibility of the Minister to create resource units within mainstream schools for the education of disabled children. (18.2 [a]). It is further clarified that the function of special schools is forbidden outside the space of mainstream schools (21.3). It can thus be cynically argued, that the

proclamations for greater inclusion by the Law imply the “spatial inclusion” of special schools within mainstreams schools or put differently, the locational co-existence of ordinary and special schools. Even this, however, is implied in provisional terms. Thus, “ It is understood that special schools that do not co-exist with ordinary schools are not established and function unless the ministerial committee judges otherwise....” (21.3) Thus, even the locational co-existence of special and mainstream schools is contingent on the “will to truth” of the institutionally empowered few. This is something that further transgresses the right of disabled children to participate in the mainstream learning experience.

The same stands true for the Regulations of the Law (186/2001) whereby the legislation is further analysed and explicated. Interestingly, the document starts with the definition of special schools as well as private special schools. Nowhere are definitions of ordinary schools or private ordinary schools mentioned. Moreover, the document is repeatedly concerned with the “ establishment of special schools” (article 6, 26). It is pertinent then, to wonder why a supposedly inclusive Law that promulgates the education of every child in her mainstream school still refers to the establishment of special schools. This stipulation is starkly antithetical to the rhetorical proclamations of the government and counteracts the precepts on the name of which the Law has been formulated.

Thus the concerns enthusiastically promulgated in the preamble regarding the rights of disabled children “for equal in rights education” and the “avoidance of the creation of a restrictive environment for the exercise of their rights” are starkly obliterated by antithetical discursive realities. For instance, so much so is the focus placed on the establishment of special schools, that the responsibilities of the Regional Committees assigned (Art.5) are limited to the assessment of children and the establishment of special schools according to the identified needs (5.d). Given the supposedly inclusive nature of the Law, one would have expected that among the responsibilities of the committee, should have been their responsibility to ensure that disabled children receive appropriate education within mainstream schools. This, however, is only tangentially articulated.

It can be generally held that the Law fails to address the responsibility of mainstream schools to ensure that disabled children receive appropriate education. There are no stipulations regarding certain procedures and coordinating efforts that enunciate the ways that ordinary schools should maximize the participation of these children in mainstream schools and classes. The concerns expressed revolve around a deficit driven perspective that gives rise and legitimises the disciplinary technologies and the normalising procedures inherent in them.

The rights of disabled children are essentially non-existent in many respects. The discursively constituted technologies of power are multifariously imposed on them and disenfranchise their rights to be different in a just and equitable education system. For instance, article 6 refers to the “confiding archive” that is kept by the regional administrator after the assessment of the child. No reference is made, however, on the necessity to disseminate the information to the people who are implicated in the education of the child, so as to be aware and jointly discuss the specific needs of each child and facilitate their inclusion in ordinary schools. What is really the use of a “confiding archive” when important information are not appropriately utilized and used for the benefit of the child?

It is clearly evident that the “linguistic silences” or “absences” of the text are also bearers of the “marshalling effect” of discourses implicated in the policymaking agenda, thus implying the perfunctory and superficial ways that the education of the children is tackled within mainstream schools. Luke (2002; 104) whilst explicating the precepts of CDA, refers to Derrida’s (1980) insights into absence and silence whereby the “‘unsaid’ and the ‘unwritten’, can be as significant as what is said”.

Thus, in attempting to expose and explicate the prevalent discursive orthodoxies of the policy document, due attention should be also given to the “discursive absences” (Stenson and Watt 1999; Faircough 2000) of the text that have an equally pervasive bearing on the ways that disabled children are positioned and constituted within the legislative document. Foucault’s idea of *despositif*, also encapsulates, albeit from a different perspective, the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the discursive and non-discursive relations constituted by “the said as well as the unsaid” (cited in Gordon 1980;194). In much the same way, Slee (2001c;114) contends “that in the absence of

a stipulative language of inclusive education, inclusive schooling represents a default vocabulary for assimilation” and thereby exclusion. Understandably, the “silences” of the official discourse and its inability to conjure up the necessity to reverse the unequal power relations inherent in the mainstream schooling bear profound implications on the ways that special education policy is conceptualised and implemented.

7.6 Parents and special education documents-The interplay of power

As the majority of documents suggest, parents have less or no access to the governmental and legislative discourses of decision-making. Their “voice” in these documents is occasionally an a-posteriori attempt to gain access to the dominant discourses and express their own occasionally opposite discursive realities, as far as the education and the future of their disabled children is concerned. Despite, however, the limited access of parents and other disability organizations to the dominant discourses, the examination of these documents vindicates the fact that the power and dominance is “ seldom absolute” and it can be “met by more or less resistance or counter power by dominated groups” (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996;85).

Thus, the less privileged groups occasionally manage to have their voice heard and exert some influence to the formation of discourses that inform special education policymaking, thereby making transparent the “‘strategic reversibility’ of power relations” (Foucault 1991;5). There are cases however, that access to the dominant discourses is institutionally prohibited, as certain bureaucratic and legislative discourses are inaccessible and difficult to dismantle. Moreover, the contradictory nature of these policies and the spaces for alternative values inherent in them empower the “selective few” to impose and legitimate their own “will to truth”. Eventually, even though power circulates throughout a socio-political system, it is “institutionally granted” to the selective few and as a result, access is encumbered to the ones whose power is not “institutionally sanctioned”. Overall, it is usually the case that within the educational policymaking process:

Only certain influences and agendas are recognised as legitimate, only certain voices are heard at any point in time within the commonsense of policy. The point is that quibbling and dissensus still occur within the babble of “legitimate” voices and sometimes the results of

quibbling and dissensus result in a blurring of meanings within texts, and in public confusion and a dissemination of doubt (Ball 1998;12).

Nevertheless, despite the overarching impact of “legitimate voices”, emanating from the higher echelons of the governmental terrain, the attempts of the parents to have a say in the dominant discourses underpinning educational policy constitution need to be examined. Parents of disabled children attempt through their organizations to intervene and alter the ways that the education of their children is planned and implemented. This is most commonly made through the documents that are sent to the Educational Committee of the Parliament aimed at counteracting the prevalent policy orthodoxies. Simultaneously, by “deciphering” the discursive struggles, it would be also possible to expose the ways that the glossy discursive reality emanating from the official declarations is translated into practice. This process will contribute to the “dismantling” critique of inclusive education policy and practice envisioned in this research.

For instance, in a recent document (October 2003) the association of “ Parents of Children with Special Abilities” comment on the current special education Law and express their dissatisfaction for the unorganised and uncoordinated ways that the inclusion of disabled children is facilitated. There seems no doubt that even though the current Law is ambitious and exhales a language of inclusion, disabled children still remain marginalized and treated as second class students within a separate and inferior special education system, albeit the pious proclamations for inclusion.

In particular the association of parents asserts the following:

In spite of the fact that the Law states that after their examination, assessment, children can be included (fully or part-time) within public mainstream primary schools, the bad organization and inadequate planning from the participating parts (Ministry of Education, Schools), create many problems. For example, the lack of appropriate personnel, either in terms of number or qualifications, problematic buildings, lack of equipment and generally, a superficial picture which is anything but welcoming to disabled children (p.1).

Trying to be more explicit, parents refer to the lack of co-ordination between the various professionals who should jointly discuss and solve the various problems, always in co-operation with the special teacher and the parents. Moreover, even though parents refer to the necessity to support the resource units both in terms of

staff and materials, they point out that resource units should be merely considered as a means to an end. Disabled children's inclusion within mainstream schools should be the harbinger of their empowerment and their entitlement of a proper education. Thus, whilst attempting to overcome the yoke of a segregating discourse and the possibility of its resurgence and ratification through resource units, they are clear about the following:

One of the aims of the resource units within schools is the inclusion of the children with special abilities to the "ordinary" classrooms. The Ministry of Education and Culture should be concerned so as the teaching in the ordinary classes be adapted to the needs of these children thus resulting both to better attendance and easier acceptance by peers (p.2).

Furthermore, they stress that the Ministry of Education and Culture should educate the whole community and especially the school environment about the role of the resource units and sensitise them in order to "accept the presence of these children, to respect their difference and embrace them with love..." (p.3). Parents are thus well aware of the unequal power relations within the wider school and social community, whereby disabled children are stigmatised and considered as "less than human beings" and simultaneously, they do not underestimate the dangers that ideological dynamics of the community (Giroux 1993) might pose to the realisation of an inclusive discourse.

Finally, among other things, parents express their dissatisfaction with the deceptive proclamations of the current Law regarding parents' empowerment through their participation in the decision making process. Even though it is clearly stated within the Law, that the Special Education Committee, which reviews the implementation of the relevant legislation and submits suggestions to the Minister, should include four parents, this is not the case. Parents thus are excluded from the bureaucratic and decision making discourse and are institutionally encumbered to have their voice heard. They express their desperation and their disempowering ignorance, using the following rhetorical questions: " Who are these parents and why is there not a communication channel with the rest of the parents regarding the work of this committee?"(p.3).

Apparently, insofar as the Law is not implemented, it seems that the various “centres of power” within the governmental terrain, are either inconsistent or have divergent viewpoints, or even worse, they do not consider special education and its relevant legislation an important thing to deal with, in diligent and consistent ways. Pashiardis (1997;662) is explicit regarding the patchy ways that policy issues are dealt with in the Cyprus context, not only in terms of special education, but in general. As he poignantly points out:

Unfortunately, there are numerous examples of policy changes and policy implementation at the national level, where those who need to implement them do not know or have not been informed about the content of the change.

It is interesting to refer to another document that has been prepared by the “Pan-cyprian Federation of Parents’ Association” on 18th November 2003. The document was sent to the Educational Committee of the Parliament and reflects the views of parents regarding the implementation of the current special education Law. Evidently, the parents’ association adopts a critical stance towards the shortcomings of the current Law and the implementation process.

The second preliminary paragraph of the document reads as follows:

Honoured gentlemen, we are aware that the ‘Special Education Law (113/99) along with its 186/2001 regulations have many shortcomings that do not allow the implementation of the Law. It has been more than two years since the voting of the Law and the results, as we know, are deplorable. Unfortunately, this is also confirmed by a recent research by the University of Cyprus (p.2).

The document brings to the surface many problems, among which the woeful lack of material and technical infrastructure to support the education of disabled children. In particular the document laments the serious lack of educational places or classrooms for disabled children and simultaneously, refers to the physical inaccessibility of educational places for these children. Going even further, the document comments on the physical exclusion of disabled children from classrooms that have been initially created for them, thus indicating the polymorphous nature of exclusionary practices that are taking place within the education system. As the excerpt reads:

There have been created rooms of special education that unfortunately are not used for the purpose they have been created. As a result, the children are educated in inappropriate places like debilitated WCs, warehouses, under the stairs or in library places (p.2).

This attests to the discussions on the varied exploitation that disabled pupils are multifariously subjected and used as a means to secure more financial resources. Another problem broached is the shortcomings of the assessment process, which it “is not continuous and it takes place superficially”. Moreover, “it does not take place on time so as the appropriate individual educational plans to be prepared according to the Law” (p.2).

Finally, the Committee of Special Education, which has been actually designated to monitor the implementation of the Law, is, “inactive” (p.3) as it has been called upon only twice since its creation. According to the document, it is necessary that the committee “should be summoned regularly and abide by the regulations of the Law. Otherwise the existence of such a committee is meaningless” (p.3).

Through the documents compiled, parents have identified a variegated assemble of problems, inconsistencies, weaknesses and omissions of the Law and the implementation processes. The documents prepared by Parental Organizations are intended to elucidate the problems and to exert pressure on the governmental terrain so as to become practically and substantially committed to the rhetorical proclamations espoused and promulgated by the official discourse. For instance, the abovementioned document has been presented to the parliamentary assembly on 18th November 2003. In response to this document, another document dated 20th January 2004 and prepared by the Minister of Education, was sent to the President of the Educational Committee of the parliament. In this document the Minister refers to his commitment to the assembly to create a committee to monitor the implementation of the Law and further, to initiate a research programme, jointly undertaken by the University of Cyprus and the Pedagogical Institute, to assess the Law and its regulations.

Evidently in the above case the Pancyprian Association of Parents managed to influence the discussions regarding special education. There has been some kind of sensitisation on behalf of the official side to provide the means for the assessment and monitoring of the implementation of the Law. The parents through their association succeeded to intervene and spell out their own “discursive reality” regarding the

current state of affairs as far as special education is concerned. This is a positive step forward as it vindicates the fact that power is dispersed and not centralised in the governmental terrain. Powerful social actors can indeed challenge the status quo and bring change to the extent, however, that the bureaucratic and institutionalised routines often permit them to do so. As the matters stand, however, it is evident that the bureaucratic belligerence is powerful enough to perpetuate the status quo and the repetitive peripheralization and disempowerment of disabled children and their advocates.

The documentary archive is also replete with letters of smaller parental groups or individual parents who comment on the particular problems they face. It is interesting to note that there are many letters of parental groups or associations that represent particular categories of disabled children like, autistic, dyslexic. Other parental groups represent certain schools and in other cases, individual parents who take the initiative to write their complaints regarding their children with the hope that things will get better. Similar problems emerge as a recurrent pattern within the various documents.

For instance a letter sent to the Commissioner of Administration on the 16th of September 2003, brings to the surface the problems that disabled children face in a resource unit within a primary school in a town. Parents are wondering and demand to know where the £23000 pounds, which were supposed to be used for the creation of new utility rooms for the resource unit of the school, have gone. Moreover, they complain about the lack of a special needs coordinator to supervise the work that is taking place in the resource unit and point out the necessity that there should be a continuation in the work of the professionals employed in the school.

Additionally, the parental group refer, as previously discussed, to the role of the resource units. They point out that the units should be the preparation of the inclusion of their children in ordinary classrooms. They refer to their children as children with “special abilities” and being well aware of the tenets of an inclusive discourse, they point out that resource units should be a means to an end since mainstream education is a matter of entitlement to their children. In particular they write the following:

One of the aims of the resource units in schools is the inclusion of children with special abilities in the “ordinary” classrooms. The Ministry of Education should cater so as the lessons of ordinary classes should be also adapted to the needs of these children thus resulting in a better attendance of the lesson as well as a better acceptance of these children by their classmates (p.1).

Finally, parents express their determination to alter the disparaging situation for their children and they demand that the state would recognise and respect the human rights of their children. Through the final paragraph they poignantly express their own discursive realities regarding the educational future of their children. This being the case, the surveillance of the state is threatened, as the parents seem well aware of the means to their empowerment. They are determined to struggle against the inimical conditions that dehumanise and demote their children. They have both the increasing knowledge, skills and the power to confront the state and the debilitating discourses that inform the current state of special education policymaking in Cyprus.

In particular they write the following powerful and pervasive statement:

We want to stress that, as parents we are determined to act dynamically so as to the abovementioned problems be solved, and even, to go to the European Court. We are no longer willing to put up with the daily distress and the inhuman conditions that our children are subjected within schools. Our children have every right for equal treatment like other children and due to their idiomorphic problems they should also have a specialised handling (not mercy) from everyone including the State (2003;3).

In another interesting memorandum signed by the Pancyprian Association of Dyslexia and dated on 17th November 2003, parents of dyslexic children also indicate the shortcomings of the current Law and provide an illuminating analysis of the impact that these shortcomings might have on the education of their children. They indicate that the Code of Practice of the current Law has been partially applied by the Ministry of Education. The article 7 of the Law, which is concerned with the early identification and intervention, is repetitively violated thus resulting in an incomplete and delayed management of the various problems that children face. Additionally, they state that even though the Law stipulates that the Code of Practice should provide complete and written information to the parents regarding the assessment of the child along the systems of assessment used, this is not the case.

Moreover, they point out that the Code of Practice is merely concerned with the children with learning difficulties and not with all children with special needs. This point has been also raised in another letter sent to the parliament, as early as on the 16th of September 1998, by the Pancyprian Organization of Deaf. In this letter they comment on the White Paper prior the voting of the Current Law and characterise the proposed stipulations of the Law as “ general and vague”(p.3), since these stipulations are not concerned with the education of particular categories of special education needs children, for instance, deaf children.

Through the examination of personal letters it is not difficult to distinguish the parents who have the cultural capital to speak on behalf of their children in appropriate and dignified ways. In particular, they express their thoughts in clarity, they support their positions and they demand their children's rights on the grounds of entitlement. On the contrary, in cases in which the parents lack the “cultural capital” to demand the appointment of an SLA according to the stipulations of the Law, they literally beg the associations and the Ministry to appoint an SLA for their children. They try to evoke sentiments of pity, and in some cases they ridicule and disparage themselves and their children in order to achieve this. Even among the parents the “balance of power” slips to the direction of certain parents and not to all of them. The imbalance of power is a recurrent subterranean force that submerges every “recess” of either heterogeneous or homogeneous social relations, even in the cases that social relations represent attempts to counteract and reverse the existing powerful circle of domination. This said, it vindicates once more the intricately complicated nature of power relations inherent in all aspects of social life. Riddell et al (1994;327) refer to the 1988 Education Reform Act and discuss the oxymoron of parental empowerment and its contribution to the existing social inequality in access to resources:

Parent power may turn out merely to add to the power of those parents who already have access to mechanisms of power rather than those who have little or no access at the present .

Also of considerable interest are the cases of the parents that use the media in order to reinforce their articulated discursive reality. As Thomas (2003;19) writes “ the media claim to speak with authority on educational issues” and therefore their prodigious contribution to the construction of the dominant discourse is well recognised. A daily

Cyprus newspaper with the biggest circulation presents as a topic of high interest in its last page an article entitled “ They put out of the classroom a physically disabled child ”(Phileleftheros 1/9/2004). The mother of the child, whose attempts for a whole year were brought to nought, used the media and in particular a popular broadcast, in order to sensitise the public and other stakeholders regarding the exclusion of her child from a mainstream school. The problem has been solved with the direct and decisive intervention of the Minister of Education. If it had not been for the media and the power relations implicated therein, the parent might not have been able to intervene and counteract the dominant discourse that excluded and marginalized her child.

The disempowerment of disabled children and their parents along with the negative role of media is further evinced within an extremely important document, which has been issued by the Commissioner for Administration on the 4th of March 2003, under the authority that is assigned to her by the Law. Within this document, she comments on her self-initiated research regarding the solution of the problems and the support of students with special needs. The research has been instigated by the case of a child categorised as having severe learning and emotional difficulties, whose case has been publicised by the media because of his behaviour in a mainstream school.

The school and the parents of the other children protested on the grounds that the child has been creating problems to the school. This received considerable coverage by the media, which further enhanced the credibility of the dominant discourse (Apple 2000; Blommaert 2005), whereby the child was considered as being a trouble and a threat to the whole school community. Lingard and Rawolle (2004;362) talk extensively on the role of media in the construction of political and policy agendas and on how “ media representation of educational issues worked to provide a social consensus or hegemony, to utilize Gramscis’s concept, around an educational issue.” The enhancement of the dominant discourse inevitably reinforces the powerlessness of the children’s parents, who lacked what Bordieu (cited in Apple 2001) calls the habitus or the “cultural capital” to participate and have a say in the dominant discourses.

The intervention of the Commissioner of Administration was powerful enough to counteract the dominant discourses, and bring to the surface the rights of this child, on an equal basis with the rights of the other children. She provides a detailed description of the child's case and reveals the inability of the school and of the education system in general, to satisfactorily deal with the case. As she suggests, the child has not been given the proper attention and the proper individual education plan, and as a result, a general deterioration in his behaviour has been observed. Before proceeding to her conjectures regarding the inadequacy of the educational system to deal with the case, she states the following:

.... Especially for [disabled] children it is necessary that beyond the remedial there should also be the pre-cautional confrontation of the social problems....It is demanded the correct functioning and implementation of the Law and for that reason the state should allow the necessary human and material resources.....One of the main aims of this research has been.....to ensure the rights of this particular child as well as the rights of the other children of this school...(p.25-26).

The quotation exposes the reactive instead of the proactive response of the education system towards disabled children. Without eschewing the necessity for remedial action towards disability, the quotation calls for remedial action towards the special education status quo. The "remedy" should be sought in the organizational and structural functioning of the system that seems wholly unprepared to respond to children's needs.

Finally, the Commissioner of Administration closes her thirty-two page report by referring to the attitudinal bias of the whole society that is immensely destructive to the attempts for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. She places the onus on schools to sensitise the public and cultivate tolerability to difference. Inclusion in schools should be the harbinger for the inclusion of these children in the whole society. By no means can society accept these children unless the schools, which represent in microcosm what is happening in the society as a whole, embrace and warmly accept difference. In particular she closes her report with the following paragraph:

I think it would be an omission not to refer to the ways that society deals with these children. Unfortunately neither the family nor the schools have cultivated to a satisfactory extent, the necessary culture for tolerance to difference, thus resulting to the stigmatisation of these children. Given the policy for the inclusion of disabled children in schools, it is

necessary that there should be specialised programmes and policies aimed to provide information and sensitise the children and the public in general on this issue (p.32).

The quotation calls to go beyond the technicalities of special education policymaking and recognise the power that is inscribed in identity and cultural politics. Successful inclusion is contingent on a heterogeneous amalgam of parameters that are intricately related within a network of unequal power relations. This is where the essence and hence, the difficulty for the realisation of an inclusive discourse lies.

7.7 Special Education Policy; Rhetoric versus Reality

In the previous section the endeavour has been to present the discursive reality of parents regarding the current legislation and depict the attempts to create “ruptures” to the “authoritative” discursive realities submerging special education legislation. The articulation of their discursive reality is essentially an attack on the government and its failure to respond to its rhetorical proclamations regarding the realisation of an inclusive discourse. In order to depict the discursive discrepancy between parents and government, it would be pertinent to present some interesting governmental documents that represent the official and hence dominant way of view regarding special education policy and practice.

It is quite interesting to observe that there are cases in which the official side acknowledges the shortcomings of the current legislation and provides a self-evaluation and critique regarding the results of the implementation process. This however, is not being done in consistent ways, since the government concomitantly tries to provide a justification for these shortcomings by referring to the “well known gap that exists between policy and practice” (18th November 2003). It seems, that the government manipulates the official discourse according to its each time vested interests and socio-political conjunctures whilst simultaneously it attempts, according to Marshall and Peters (1999;xv) to remain strong by deploying the “...narrative skill and the spin-doctoring to ensure that its policies are accepted as ‘truths’ ”.

It is clearly evident that the discursive reality presented by the government is quite nebulous and inconsistent in the sense that on the one hand it criticizes the legislation and on the other hand, it attempts to justify its shortcomings by “lamenting” the unavoidable and difficult to bridge gap between policy and practice, without, however, attempting to theorize and interrogate this “gap”. It is apparent that the state whilst being in the midst of contradictory expectations and interests, attempts not only to extol its achievements but also to express its awareness and concerns regarding the problems of the current legislation, and reassure its critics that the government is working hard towards the amelioration of the situation. All the above embody and reflect the contradictions and tensions that are inherent in State policy (Codd 1988) that “seek the optimal realisation of multiple values and goals” (Norwich 2000;19).

The tactic deployed in the governmental documents is an attempt to compromise the multiple and contradictory discourses that inform the policymaking agenda. By acknowledging and attributing to certain factors the shortcomings of the Law, the government provides an “alibi” to confront its critics and minimize the possibility to exacerbate its “legitimacy deficits”. Simultaneously, it deploys rhetoric with great dexterity in order to express its own discursive reality -if not discursive illusion- regarding its achievements and its virtuous struggles towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse. As Codd (1988;21) so succinctly puts it:

Because the state has a particular interest in promoting public discussion of educational policy, its agencies produce various policy documents which can be said to constitute the official discourse of the state (Codd 1985) Thus, policies produced by and for the state are obvious instances in which language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of a universal public interest.

I will now attempt to briefly identify some of the “discursive manoeuvres” that the government deploys in order to impose its own discursive illusion regarding inclusive education and practice.

The Ministry of Education in an urgent memorandum dated 6th November 2001 and sent to the President and the members of the Parliamentary Education Committee, reconfirms the commitment of the government to the proclamations of the current Law. The document refers to the actions that the government has undertaken in order

to facilitate the implementation of the Law. It is a quite detailed reference to the financial, material and human resources that have been allocated, as well as the creation of the favourable conditions for the successful implementation of the Law. Among other things it is stated that:

There have been seminars to inform the head-teachers as well as the special teachers regarding the stipulations of the Law along the obligations of schools towards the children with special needs. Similar in service seminar are also planned for all teachers (p.2).

The document closes with a very optimistic statement that expresses the belief that “during the first year of the implementation of the Law, the Ministry of Education has undertaken all the necessary actions to better respond to the requirement of the Law”(p.3). Having spelled out its own discursive reality, the Ministry attempts to persuade everybody regarding the credibility and the unassailability of that reality. Everything seems to be under control and the official side seems more than content about the attempts undertaken during the initial stages of the implementation of the Law.

However, it did not take much to find out that the Government did not abide by its rhetorical proclamations even in terms of issues that had merely to do with technicalities. I was taken aback when I found a document that confirms the government explicitly rescinded one of the 1999 stipulations of the Law, due to financial considerations. The article 12.d of the Law states that: “ it is understood that, when for specific reasons, it is not possible for a child to attend the school of her area, the Regional Committee provides for **her free transportation to and from the school**”. The government whilst reconsidering the issue and its financial implications, prepared a document dated 13th June 2001 and absconded itself from the responsibility for “free transportation”. Instead, it was decided to allocate a monthly fixed amount of money to the family and render it responsible for the transportation of child, something that it was economically more viable. Thus, as it is stated in the document: “ Due to the fact that the transportation of the children as stipulated in the Law, is not economically advantageous, the family will receive £30....”

In another document signed by the Minister of Education and sent to the Parliamentary Committee on the 21st October 2003, the government, seemingly

oblivious to its inconsistency, continues to pride itself for the attempts made for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Among other things, it repeats that the Ministry is especially concerned with the in-service training of teachers regarding special education something that as will be later discussed, is again refuted by the small-scale research undertaken by the University of Cyprus. Moreover, the document indicates that the Ministry is gathering information regarding the problems and the shortcomings of the Law. Even if this is the case, what is done is fragmented and superficial since the document sent by the University depicts quite the opposite. In particular the research undertaken by the University of Cyprus (2003) documents the problems of the implementation process and brings to the surface the unwillingness of the government to provide substantial in-service training to educators.

What is interesting in the abovementioned document, however, is that unlike the beguiling rhetoric evinced in the official document of 2001, the Ministry acknowledges the shortcomings of the implementation process. This is a step forward since there is at least the acknowledgement that there are certain problems that the Ministry should tackle. As the following quotation reads: “ During the two years of the implementation process, the Law has presented, as it has been anticipated, many problems in areas whereby the policymakers did not anticipate or they have accidentally omitted” (p.3). It needs noting, however, that the bulk of the problem has been merely placed on the time-consuming and complicated assessment procedures of the children.

Almost a month after the issue of the above document, on the 18th November 2003, the Ministry of Education sent a very interesting, complementary to the above document memorandum, to the President of the Educational Committee of the parliament. The Ministry makes again the following more explicit acknowledgment regarding the shortcomings of the implementation process: “ Despite the coordinated attempts of the Ministry and the allocation of important financial resources, we cannot claim that integration has been achieved to desirable levels” (p.4). Having acknowledged the shortcomings of the legislation, the Ministry provides justifications regarding the identified gap between rhetoric and practice. In particular it is stated that:

It is widely known that it is very difficult to bridge the gap for the acceptance of **integration**, which all of us very easily rhetorically proclaim, and **practice**. The impression that special education is a separate part of ordinary education with its own culture and structures it is deeply rooted within us. We cannot claim that there is an entire alignment of special and general education....(emphasis in original)(p.4).

Interestingly, four years after the voting of Special Education Law, the Ministry insinuates that the shortcomings of its implementation process can be primarily attributed to an erroneous philosophy. It is clearly stated that the distinction between special and ordinary education should be readily jettisoned if we are to achieve the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Whilst, however, it is acknowledged that what prevails is misunderstanding and misconception, as far as the philosophical tenets of an inclusive discourse are concerned, nothing is said about the necessity and the ways to reverse the situation.

Moreover, what is readily striking is that even though the abovementioned acknowledgements are made, the terminology used within these official documents is not clear, thus immediately reflecting the existence of a muddled and blurred philosophy even within the governmental terrain. Thus in these official documents, notwithstanding the fact that in the international literature there is a clear distinction between integration and inclusion, the word “integration” (entaxi) and inclusion (ensomatosi) are still erroneously and interchangeably used, thus obscuring and obfuscating the issues. This attests to Phtiaka’s (2001b;6) contemplation that: “ We are now at a time when all the previous formations of special education coexist in a peculiar embrace, and old terminology is found next to new terminology confusing the issues”.

Finally, it is interesting to refer to the document prepared by the University of Cyprus and dated 21st October 2003 that reveals the shortcomings of the implementation process thereby making explicit the fact that the praiseworthy proclamations of the government need to be critically interrogated. The document is based on the results of a small-scale research regarding special education practice and brings to the surface the deplorable state of special education. The document raises issues regarding the inimical to inclusion conditions within which the implementation process is taking place. These conditions are starkly the result of the inability of the government to

commit to its rhetorical proclamations. For example, the document refers to some of these conditions including the glaring lack of infrastructure to support inclusion as well as the negative attitudes of teachers towards disabled children. This is attributed to the fact that four years after the voting of the Law there has not been any in-service training for teachers in spite of the opposite claims depicted in the facile official rhetoric. As the following excerpt reads:

[The attitudes of teachers] ... in the best cases attitudes of mercy, indifference and of course confusion and fear.... Most of them consider an unnecessary problem the existence of children with special needs in their classrooms and they are unprepared and usually unwilling to deal with them. Teachers appear especially in haste to defer the responsibility of a child to someone else something that explains the huge number of deferrals (p.2).

The hostile attitudes of teachers reflect the hostile attitudes of the school community and of the society as a whole because there have not been any coordinated efforts to cultivate an inclusive ethos. The charity discourse of disability is the moving force behind all the initiatives undertaken for disabled children. These hostile attitudes are wholly defined, according to the document “...almost entirely from fiestas like Radiomarathon given that there is not an alternative voice of influence on the education system....” (p.1). The document concludes that there are many difficulties in the implementation of the Law and warns that a failure in the attempts undertaken for the creation of an inclusive discourse, four years after the implementation of the Law, will create a “ dangerous precedent that will condemn a priori every new attempt for inclusion” (p.3).

As the matters stand, the government in Cyprus has still to deal with technicalities and procedural issues. Things that should have been self-evident and well established by now are still struggled over. For instance, it is worth noting that the Ministry still tries to make clear that disabled children should receive their education in appropriate classrooms. It was not until five years after the voting of the Law, that the government sensitised and decisively warned the headmasters of schools against the iniquitous placement of disabled children in inappropriate and unacceptable rooms. In particular, the government sent a document on the 12th August 2004, to mainstream schools in order to warn against the arbitrary removal of disabled students from the designated special education classrooms, whereby they are supposed to receive individualised help. Surprisingly, five years after the introduction of a supposedly more inclusive

legislation of 1999, the government is still trying to ensure the locational integration of disabled children in mainstream schools and their right to receive education in appropriate rooms, thereby documenting in the best possible way the exclusionary ethos is still prevalent in the education system.

Undoubtedly, it is crucial to give plenty of time for everybody to realise that inclusion is not a new name for special education. Rather, it is an entirely new concept that leaves behind the gloomy years whereby disabled children belonged to a different pedagogy. Inclusion refers to all children irrespective of their variegated trajectories of development and it is primarily concerned with the effective education for all. It is the ecumenical plea for respect to difference on whatever grounds this is perceived and defined. Inclusion is meant to be the harbinger for a just and indeed better society and it cannot be so unless the Government goes beyond rhetoric and is genuinely concerned with the realisation of an inclusive discourse.

7.8 Conclusion

Documentary analysis, supplemented by the utilization of sociological and historical tools, has enabled me to delineate some specific aspects of the evolution of special education policy in Cyprus. Segregating discourses were gradually and after intense political struggles, substituted by inclusive discourses aimed towards the empowerment of disabled children. Despite, however, the ostensible progress achieved so far, it is still the case that the rights of disabled children and their advocates are incessantly transgressed and violated. Thus, notwithstanding the “linguistic surgery” that the policy documents have undergone throughout the last few years, the historical imperatives of special educational thinking are still at the fore, thereby corroborating the concomitant resurgence and ascendancy of exclusionary values and practices.

The attempt to weld together antithetical discursive elements within education policy documents indicates that something is amiss both conceptually and pragmatically. In other words, the attempt to interweave rhetorical proclamations in favour of inclusion with “clauses of conditionality” aimed to gloss over exclusionary perceptions and attitudes, does not only indicate an erroneous philosophy, but it also indicates a

weakly-committed and inconsistent governmental stance towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse.

Evidently, the grid of power/knowledge that in essence constitutes what has come to be called special education is still dominated by deficit and pathologizing perspectives. Despite the attempts to tilt the balance away from special education imperatives towards the tenets of an inclusive discourse, the power centres that uphold the status quo are well institutionalised and sanctioned.

Even though the attempts to expunge the yoke of special education thinking are visible, it should be acknowledged that these attempts are in their incipient stages and it would really need plenty of time and genuine commitment to dissipate the intricate and multifarious nature of the “biotechnologies of power” that bolster and perpetuate the status quo. The road leading to change is indeed fraught with hindrances but nevertheless the reversibility prospects need to be struggled for in urgent and politically informed ways.

Having analysed the variegated ways that power manifests itself within the official policy documents, the next chapter concentrates on the narratives of key policy actors and attempts to interrogate and ultimately dismantle the power/knowledge web that has diachronically and synchronically colluded towards the discursive constitution of Cyprus special educational policymaking landscape. The dismantling process makes transparent the convoluted and interactive, as well as the precarious ideological and structural elements, that bear a major impact on policy constitution and dissemination.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Key policymakers and their will to truth

Introduction

This chapter describes and analyses the interviews with key-policy actors. Their overall aims were to gather information that would facilitate the comprehensive analysis of the “polymorphous interweaving of correlations” (Foucault 1991;58) and the asymmetrical power relations implicated in Cyprus special education policymaking. More specifically the interviews sought to investigate, on the one hand the macro and micro-politics that historically impacted on the formation of special education, and on the other hand, to examine the mosaic of discourses-as conceptualised and envisioned by key policy actors-, which currently inform special education policymaking in Cyprus.

Whilst the analysis proceeds, it becomes evident that key policymakers’ will to truth is not only informed by the pervasiveness of institutionalised regimes emanating from the absolutistic and binary discourses of individual pathology, but they are also influenced by an array of other discursive realities that have an indirect, albeit, pervasive impact, on educational policymaking process. Historical conjectures, political exigencies, economic considerations, social and cultural norms are intermingled with the supranational trends and vested interests and bear a profound impact on the avowed ideological predilections of key policymakers.

The analysis of key policymakers’ interviews vindicates that the knowledge basis of special education policymaking is constituted within an interactive web consisting of an amalgam of synchronic and diachronic ideological and structural dynamics. Through the process of inquiry it will be possible to provide a more adequate understanding of the “wider picture” of special education policymaking, which lies beyond the decontextualised and mono-dimensional contours that have hitherto held sway over the field.

8.1 The origins of integration

It is interesting to start the analysis with the geneology of integrative attempts in Cyprus, along with the people who can be characterised as the protagonists in these endeavours. Being a small state, things in Cyprus can change significantly, when certain institutionally empowered people wish to do so, even if the system might be wholly unprepared to adapt to these changes. The counter views are occasionally not existent or even muted within a highly centralised education system that further empowers the selected few to impose their own “will to truth”.

Special education in Cyprus officially started with the 1979 Law that was predicated on a separatist model. Before that Law there was not a unified legislation. Special schools were established by charitable organizations or private initiatives and the legislation was fragmented and perfunctory and referred to each school separately. It needs noting that despite that fact that it constituted a landmark in special education, the 1979 Law was short-lived, since it was implemented for less than a decade. Later, certain stakeholders, who pursued higher studies in special education abroad and especially in the UK, introduced the word “integration” in Cyprus. Phtiaka (2000;2) whilst referring to the early integrative attempt in Cyprus, writes that they were the result of a constellation of “personal ambitions and goals” and “international circumstances and influences”.

The “personal ambitions” insinuation has been attested and clarified by almost all the respondents during the interviewing process, who, whatever their position in the governmental echelon, did not hesitate to be explicit and definite on the issues. It is well known by now that the main innovator was a senior official concerned with special education, whose attempts to introduce change involved some personal aspirations and vested interests.

Initially, I was really taken aback by the audacity and straightforwardness or as otherwise stated, by the “parhessia” of the respondents in nominating somebody as the “moral perpetrator” of the initial abortive integrative attempts. Parrhesia, is a Greek word, deployed by Foucault (1999:5) to indicate “ a specific relation to truth through

frankness....a certain relation to himself or other people through criticism”(cited in Peters 2003; 213). My proclaimed surprise stems from the fact that “parhessia” does not constitute an endemic characteristic of the Cypriot people, and particularly so of those who hold key positions in the civil service or are actively involved in the political sphere of the island. As Mavratsas (2003:131) so pertinently points out “ ..in the Greek-Cypriot political structure there is not the tolerance of the different opinion...[and] one basic characteristic...is the lack of the social criticism as an established political practice.”

The uncritical and hastened introduction of foreign ideas, in a wholly unprepared and unaltered education system, was the result of a complex array of factors including the influence of a key individual. Everything that happened is implicated within the complex power /knowledge web and can be explained only when the mechanisms of power are unveiled and carefully articulated. The following quotation from a knowledgeable key policy actor, whose realm lies outside the governmental terrain, makes transparent some of the “micro-technologies” of power relations germane to the integrative attempts undertaken during that period.

...There is a complicated situation, some ideas were introduced, these ideas were fashionable...and it was an era when the parents also discovered these ideas and pressed a lot, and personal aspirations of certain people allied with the pressures of parents for something better for their children...it has been a blind (sic) way forward, steered by personal aspirations. You know in Cyprus an inspector...in order to excel from the plethora of other inspectors, did introduce an innovationThat is what the particular inspector did he adopted the novel idea of integration without knowing what exactly it is and without, neither him nor the system, being prepared. He adopted the idea in order to retire as a...[very high position within the Ministry]... something that he managed to achieve...

Clearly this is a contentious issue. However, another respondent maintained:

I consider that he [the inspector] was in a responsible position as the only inspector of special education, and the only person who was related to these things since he came to Cyprus, he should have been more careful. I think he contributed to strategic movements that were not for the children's benefit. For example he used the pressures of parents to create a situation, whereby the system was not probably ready to accept...He was not sure of what he was doing. He experimented...

It should be noted, that personal aspirations would not have been enough to introduce change, unless for example, parental will was in alignment with these aspirations. Parents are also nominated as key policy actors who, influenced by the international trends of the period, exerted pressure on the government and succeeded to introduce some change. As the same respondent pointed out:

The activation of parents to sensitise the stakeholders in Cyprus... This I think might have been the most important factor... they demanded more chances for children with learning difficulties and the government responded.

The parents of the deaf children were the first to demand the integration of their children in mainstream schools, something that was achieved as early as in 1993. A very influential actor who has been the main protagonist in the voting of the legislation at that particular time said that even though the Law consisted no more than three lines it was revolutionary.

The state succumbed to parental pressures and introduced the legislation for the integration of deaf children, without seemingly giving careful thought to the consequences. The following excerpt from a knowledgeable respondent illustrates some of these issues:

...which "normal" state introduces a legislation that responds only to one pressure group, does not take into consideration other factors and ignores all the other categories [of disabled children]. Why the deaf and not the other children? How was the parliament persuaded to vote for the deaf and not for the others?... It was starkly the result of pressures. The persons who were implicated were very powerful...

Gradually integration attempts, albeit unofficially, were directed to all disabled children without the proper consultation, negotiation and preparation. An important respondent within the Ministry of Education who had a first hand experience when those changes were taking place, stated that these attempts "were massive and took place in a haste" whilst, simultaneously, he testified about his own experience on how this sudden mainstream dumping took pace. As he says:

I was one of the first to be in virulent opposition with those integrative attempts because I believed that they took place in the worst possible

way....After a year I witnessed how seven students became “failed integration students”, because they went to a place whereby they could not communicate, and nobody knew them...

Disabled children were subjugated to the arbitrary will of the powerful few and removed from special schools and literally dumped in unchanged and essentially, hostile mainstream schools. As a result of “dumping”, one of the respondents talked about a “destroyed” generation of children, whose future was marred and sacrificed. As the respondent notes:

...I think that there is a generation of children that was “destroyed” ...It was the children who were in special schools and got out, especially from the school of the deaf, ...they got out unprepared in an unprepared system...and many of them went back to the [special] schools. Some of these children were at the school of the deaf until recently...They used to call these children “failed integration students” and set them as an example in order to stress the failure of integration...

The whole idea of integration was based on the romantic idea to make ordinary schools accessible to all children (Barton 1987) without, however, pursuing organisational, structural and pedagogical school reform. The massive “maindumping” was the result of the exercise of rationalised “sovereign power” (Foucault 1981 cited in Popkerwitz and Brennan 1998;17) from certain policy actors without initially serious resistance. Policymakers managed to consign convincing rhetoric that obscured the abusive dimension of power and concomitantly managed to foreground the fact that they were ostensibly working towards children’s “best interests”.

A very eloquent policy actor, probably due to the fact that his realm falls outside the governmental terrain, provided a vitriolic criticism of the situation. He poignantly pointed out that even the key policymakers of the time, who promulgated and inaugurated integration were not fully aware of what they were advocating and unfortunately, he maintains this is still the case. As he put it:

I would dare say that these persons have not fully realised these ideas and it is my contention that they still don’t, because there are tremendous contradictions and I consider that there is not a stable and comprehensive philosophy that leads the way...

The reduction of integration to locational integration inevitably led to failure due to the lack of proper preparation, consultation and negotiation. It also needs noting that the worst thing for failed integrative attempts is not only the negative consequences this might have on disabled children but it also constitutes a barrier to future attempts for change.

Changes do not emanate from a vacuum. They are instigated by certain ideological, political and economic factors, which jointly collude towards the transformation of the current state of affairs. The forces, and the power relations immanent in them, that act upon bringing educational change are multidimensional and interactive. As Deleuze, whilst summarizing Foucault's work on power, so pertinently puts it:

Force is never singular but essentially exists in relation with other forces...It is 'an action upon action, on existing actions...it is 'a set of actions upon other actions'. We can therefore conceive of a necessarily open list of variables expressing a relation between forces or power relation, constituting actions upon actions; to incite, to induce, to seduce, to make easy or difficult, to enlarge or limit, to make more or less probable, and so on (Deleuze 1986;70 cited in Kendal and Wickham 1999;50).

Social actors alone cannot thus bring change unless the ideological and institutional infrastructure of a socio-political system is favourably positioned towards these changes. Change is instigated by an array of elements that are congruent to the emergence of the dominant “ particular forms of reasoning and ‘telling the truth’...and kinds of knowledge central to establishing a particular discourse...” (Popkerwitz and Brennan 1998;15) As matters stand, the underlying dynamics of the “wider picture” in Cyprus at that time, advocated the integrative attempts whilst simultaneously facilitated the fulfilment of state, group and personal aspirations and vested interests.

8.2 Ideological and social factors

It was an era when Cyprus was bombarded by foreign ideas regarding the rights of the individual and by implication, the rights of disabled children to be educated with their peers in mainstream settings. The Warnock report in the UK as well as certain reports commenting on special education in Cyprus (Phtiaka 2000) along with the covenants that Cyprus signed in the UN, led to the reconsideration of segregation, and everything colluded towards integration.

Generally, there has been a tremendous sensitisation regarding human rights, the concern for the value of people's individuality and the recognition of rights of citizens. Moreover, another respondent within the Ministry of Education, talks about the influence of certain emergent ideas during that period, like that of "multiple intelligence", "mixed abilities classrooms", and the supranational trends that are encouraged by the E.U. Furthermore, as another respondent who was in the forefront of the policymaking process of that period pointed out, Cyprus had the opportunity to attend the developments abroad and adapt them accordingly. All of these provided new perspectives for reconsidering the future of disabled children. Contrariwise, another important social actor, whose realm falls outside the governmental terrain, was adamant to contend, that what happened in Cyprus was clearly, reiterating her phrase, a "copy and paste from Warnock's ideas and the 1981 Education Act", in the sense that Cyprus uncritically introduced and assimilated policies and practices from a context that not only differed enormously, but which also had a long history in special education. The case of Cyprus constitutes a vivid example of what Noah (1984) so succinctly calls "the use and abuse of comparative education" whereby "quick fix" ideas and principles are uncritically borrowed from one socio-political context to the other without contemplating the adverse consequences" (cited in Watson 2001;13).

Parents have been overwhelmingly influenced by these changes and were empowered to claim the rights of their disabled children in more dynamic ways. They pressed towards the invitation of experts from abroad in order to assess the state of special education in Cyprus and provide suggestions for its improvement. This led to an array of reports like the Unesco 1980,1993,1997; Barnard 1997; Markides 1990; Constandinides 1992 and Paschalis 1994 that adumbrated the worrying situation of special education in Cyprus and included certain proposals for the amelioration of the situation.

A key member of a Parents Association recounted a very interesting incidence that took place after his return from abroad in order to denote his increased sensitisation regarding the human rights and individuality of disabled children. The incidence indicates the willingness and determination of a powerful social actor to counteract the dominant discourse that construes disabled children as alien, abnormal, inferior

and pitiful creatures whose perceived “abnormality” rendered them eligible to be visited and “scrutinized”. Simultaneously, it illuminates the power of “identity politics” in constituting the subject and their impact on educational policymaking. In particular it brings to the surface the “identity politics” as they emanate from the prevalent insular mentalities of Cypriot people and the pejorative attitudes towards disabled people. The incidence was recounted by the respondent in the following way:

The headmaster told me that there would be some visitors to the special school. Before the “visitors” got off the bus I went and asked them if they brought “bananas”. “What shall we do with the bananas sir?” they asked me... They went to the headmaster and asked who was the man who asked them if they brought bananas. The headmaster came and asked me what was going on. I asked whether the school and the children were a “zoo” and if they brought bananas... There had been a great fuss, they called the minister of education who told them to get immediately into the bus and leave because he knew that I would not let them get into the school ...

Giroux (1993) gives prominence to the overwhelming power of “identity politics” and urges the following:

The concept of identity politics should be reproblematised as part of a broader attempt to analyse how the dynamics of cultural power work within the classical economy of language, representation, and institutional structures to position ‘a subject or a set of people as the other of a dominant discourse’ (Giroux 1993;68).

Evidently, cultural politics are interlinked with the triptych of language, power and discourse whose role is significant in inclusive education policymaking. This is where the role of “dismantling” or “disassembling” critique lies, as it can potentially interrogate and counteract the derogatory forms of subjectivity imposed on disabled children. Foucault is extensively concerned with the ways that individuals are constituted as subjects in modern societies. As he writes: “...the individual with his identity is the product of a relation of power exercised over bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires...” (Foucault 1980a; 73-74). Given his thorough interest in the constitution of subjectivities, Foucault (1980a; 116) points out the necessity to interrelate micro-power to interests that amassed in the broader social-structural context with the “fine meshes of the web of power” that “are undoubtedly essential to the general functioning of the wheels of power.”

The notion of power as conceptualised and explicated by Foucault, however, has not only negative connotations but it has also productive and constructive effects. Thus in attempting to unveil the “fine meshes of the web of power” that colluded towards the creation of a non-segregating education policy, it is worth referring to an endemic characteristic of the Cypriot society that, albeit indirectly, instigated these changes. According to one respondent who is a member of the parliament, the families especially in urban areas, unlike earlier years when families had more children, had one or two children and therefore, tended to give greater attention to their disabled child. As the respondent said:

Cypriot family during the last 2-3 decades has been radically metamorphosed... .. Previously a family who had 5 or 6 children, even if this sounds cynical,.. accepted easier the fact that one might have had a problem.
....

Apparently, children became more valuable to smaller nuclear families, and parents were more concerned to ensure a better future for them. It also needs noting that Cyprus gradually ceased to be an agricultural society thus resulting in the appearance of middle class and affluent parents with increased demands for better education and better future possibilities for their disabled children. These attitudes rendered the state responsible to provide a better future, a concept that was mirrored in the new legislation.

Moreover, another endemic characteristic of the Cyprus society that has impacted positively on the integrative movement is the fact that there have never been elitist and non-elitist schools, something that meant that each child irrespective of their socio-economic background attended their neighbourhood school. This is something that is conducive to accepting the axioms that relate to inclusive education. As one respondent who had a direct contact with the UK educational systems prior to his return in Cyprus put it:

...This is an extremely important thing. All the children study in their neighbourhood schools. This means that all children rich and poor, of educated or not parents will attend the same school. This is the best balsam so as not to have social and class discriminations...There are many public schools that are by far better than the private so the picture was different to what happened in other countries like in the UK...

Having attempted to trace the micro-contextual dynamics that engendered a greater concern for integrating disabled children in mainstream schools, it would have been an omission not to make reference to the Special Olympic Games that have been taking place in Cyprus since the 1980's, something that for the first time sensitised people and especially student-teachers of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute that trained Greek Cypriot teachers until 1992 when the University of Cyprus was established. The organization of Special Olympics marked a new era whereby reiterating one respondent who has been at the forefront of this endeavour and used to teach in the Pedagogical Academy:

We have then observed the change of the climate. This change has pushed towards the realisation that no child should remain marginalized...

Obviously the Special Olympic Games brought to light the children who would have otherwise been secluded in their houses. Contrary to their seclusion that has traditionally fuelled prejudice and fear, their participation in such an event made other people see that these children like everybody else, have their own needs and potentials. The opportunity given to them to participate in an athletic and thereby, social event precipitate the "otherness" image imputed to them through their erstwhile "obscurity" in mainstream social life.

8.3 Political factors

Political factors are especially important in constituting the wider picture of educational policymaking. War is the ultimate catastrophic political factor, which adversely affects a socio-political system and creates insurmountable problems. The Turkish invasion in Cyprus in 1974 along with the past incidents of foreign intruders, not only spread fear among the Cypriot people, but also created huge problems in education. Cyprus, especially after the invasion of 1974, had other priorities in its political agenda and unsurprisingly, was left behind, as far as the education of disabled children is concerned. As one political incumbent points out:

....Cyprus until 1974 and after, within its idiomorphic conditions had other priorities...It has been a developing country, agricultural society, agricultural economy in the early 60's... Immediately after 1974, education was obliged to "absorb" the shock that has been left in the society. It was not until recently that the country managed to "stand on its feet".

For instance, a SEN inspector who had a personal experience of the war situation, said that disabled children in special education prior to the 1974 invasion could have been integrated much earlier, if the priorities of the state had not changed:

When the priorities have changed and for example the schools of the deaf was accommodated in refugees' camps for 3 years, you understand that the primary concern was its survival and not "integration", even though the school of the deaf had been integrated since 1958 when deaf children were sent to attend some lessons to mainstream vocational schools. Undoubtedly the political problem and the ensuing financial cost for defence purposes, left special education and other social initiatives behind. The priority has been to protect our selves, to ensure our physical existence...

Koutselini (1997) provides an insightful account into the ways that national ideals impacted on the personal identities of the people in Cyprus. This is something also elucidated by Mavratsas (2003) who provides an equally erudite account on the ways that nationalism impacts on all the aspects the personal, social and political sphere of the island. Reiterating Koutselini (1997; 403):

Throughout history Greek Cypriots have constructed their personal identity based on the national identity and their ontological being depends on maintenance of national characteristics and ideals...All social, practical and personal values were only the means to an end, that is, realising the national ideals...

Given the endogenous ideological predispositions and solidified subject positions, it is no wonder then that even more than thirty years after the Turkish invasion in Cyprus, the promulgated emphasis of education during the last years was to upgrade the objective **" I get to know, I don't forget and I struggle"**. This has been actually the prevalent aim of the education system during the last thirty years. As we read in a document prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2003;2):

...the ulterior motive being for all children to know the occupied land and places of Cyprus and remember vividly. Further to acquiring information and knowledge, developing right attitudes, values and principles, so as to be able to think critically and care for the national problem of the country, constituted the above ulterior motive. [my translation]

Evidently, political factors are especially important in constituting the wider picture of educational policymaking and as the matters stand, in a country with a turbulent political situation, special education is inevitably considered as a minor issue. This is especially true for a country like Cyprus whose political problem remains unresolved for more than thirty years, despite the different solution scenarios that have been proposed.

The most recent one is based on the Anan plan which has been rejected through referendum by the majority of Greek-Cypriots and characterised as unfair for them. Nevertheless it is possible that the plan will be amended and would be re-proposed for a viable solution of the Cyprus problem. Understandably, a possible solution of the Cyprus problem is expected to bring major changes to the political, cultural, social and educational scene of the island. As one of the respondents points out:

We should talk about two communities, two languages and two different educational systems whereby we should cultivate the acceptance of the "other" within the school. When the Cyprus problem will be solved means that you live with the Turkish-Cypriots...We are becoming bi-communal or multi-communal society...something that influences the society, which starts to be obliged to live with others, to accept the different easily...this will probably influence education in general...the nationalistic elements of the system, there will be an attempt to subtract them especially in History and Geography, to improve the syllabi that might also influence special education.

In the same way another important respondent within the government stated the following:

Even though the educational issues within Anan plan refer separately to each constituting state, it is expected that due to co-existence that will be the result of a possible solution, there would be a change in the context of the syllabus as well as of some books so as to cultivate acceptance and multiculturalism, not only in education but in the Cypriot society as well.

It is not a coincidence, then, that an official document sent to schools on the 12th August 2004, encourages the obligation of schools to accept and enrol Turkish-Cypriots as well as other foreigner students. The document reflects the sensitisation of the government regarding the enrolment of Turkish-Cypriots in schools and more

interestingly, it is indicated that this should be done even if the parents of the child stay illegally on the island. This is the conjecture drawn after the Ministry of Education asked consultation from the General Public Prosecutor. Based on the stipulations of the Constitution (article 20), the General Public Prosecutor sent a letter to the Ministry according to which the right of education

... is not limited to the citizens of the republic, but also covers and foreigners...the failure [of the foreigners] to show an identity of the Foreigners and Immigration Service, which indicates when their visa in Cyprus expires, or the duration of the visa, or the status of their stay in the Republic, should not be legally constitute a barrier to the enrolment of their children in mainstream schools (11th May 2004) (my translation).

The document reflects an increased multicultural ethos of acceptance something that is supplemented by another perspective, whereby children of different religions and dogmas have the right, after the written demand of their parents, not to attend the subject of religious education, which is concerned with the Orthodox Christian Religion.

Understandably, all the above reflect the changes that the education system is experiencing, which even though they are not directly related to special education their future impact would be substantial on the ways that the closed and ethnocentric Cyprus educational system addresses issues of difference and social exclusion.

Notwithstanding the fact that another prominent incumbent poignantly negated the possibility of a solution based on the Anan plan, he stated, that even if this were the case, there would be two distinct communities with two distinct educational systems. This provision is the same with the one that was stipulated by the Constitution of Zurich, which was given to Cyprus after it was declared as a two nation independent state in 1960. Moreover, along with another respondent, he also referred to a direct consequence that a possible solution might have on special education. This is concerned with the fact that special education in the Turkish-Cypriot part of the island is underdeveloped in comparison with that is happening here and therefore the recognised state of Cyprus should financially contribute towards its development. Thus as the following quotation suggests:

With a possible solution based on Anan plan we would finance the Turkish education in order to reach the levels of the Greek one... this is going to be the only change. There will not be any other ways of intervention, neither to their internal affairs nor to ours...

This being the case, another important political actor within the government said that the children of Turkish-Cypriots who attend schools in the occupied area of the island have already asked for help and support. This phenomenon is expected to rise in case of a possible solution. This will mean that it would be imperative that more financial and other resources should be directed to special education.

It is questionable, however, if there would be the necessary financial resources to be directed to special education, since the increasing financial demands of the Cyprus government, which is called to include Turkish-Cypriots, are already visible. It is at this point that the E.U is expected to contribute financially to Cyprus in order to enhance the standard of living of Turkish-Cypriots and equalise the income per capital between the two communities. A senior member of the government pointed out that the government has already promulgated certain measures for the support of the Turkish-Cypriots in the general education system. Some of them as recounted by the respondent are the following:

- The government will undertake the tuition fees of Turkish-Cypriot students who study in recognised by the Ministry of Education and Culture, pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education private schools.
- The allocation of a number of scholarships to Turkish-Cypriot students who stay in the occupied areas to study in the English school of Nicosia.
- Financial support to deprived Turkish-Cypriots for books, travelling expenses, uniforms etc.
- The allocation of money for the preservation of Turkish-Cypriot schools according to the pursuant needs
- Free Greek and Turkish lessons to Turkish-Cypriots (adults and children) from the Governmental Institutes of Learning.
- The allowance of free lunch to all Turkish-Cypriot students who study in our schools.

Evidently, the measures promulgated are very positive, in spite of the fact that this will require increased financial resources. Simultaneously, it is worth noting that the particular measures referring solely to Turkish-Cypriots should not been seen in terms of an increased multiculturalism. They are part of the official policy of

“*epanaproseggisi*” (rapprochement) adopted by the Greek Cypriot side after 1974. Constantinou and Papadakis (2001:130) whilst providing an insightful account of the political situation of the island write the following:

The term *epanaproseggisi* means ‘coming together again’. Since the official Greek Cypriot aim is that the unification of Cyprus is the desired outcome, it is felt that the measures of goodwill towards Turkish Cypriots are necessary to display the existence of good intentions with regard to the future.

It is, nevertheless, hoped that the increased financial resources allotted will not work against Special Education, in the sense that the state would not consider Special Education as a matter of secondary importance in comparison with the immense educational, political and social demands that are expected to emerge, and proliferate under the *epanaproseggisi* regimes, in case of a settlement of the so call “Cyprus problem”.

Finally, it is worth noting that in some cases respondents digressed from the discussion on special education issues and focused on the political dimension of a possible solution based on the Anan plan. For instance, a major political actor whilst commenting on the financial help that Cyprus gives to the education of Turkish-Cypriots, referred to the condemnable, as he stated, act of the Turkish authorities to tear off the pages of geography and history books, which were sent to the enclave Greek students in the occupied areas, because they allegedly included nationalistic elements. Having said this, it is no wonder why the immense interest on the political problem of Cyprus has so far diverted attention from special education.

Evidently, education policy-making is indeed a profusion of entangled events (Ball 1994b) and it is anticipated that special education, albeit indirectly, will be substantially influenced by the socio-political changes that a possible solution of the Cyprus problem will bring. The state of Cyprus will have to face the challenge of two distinct educational systems, which will be divergent in terms of ethnicity, religion and culture. It should be noted, however, that the cultivation of a communal ethos is not expected to be an easy task within schools and especially within the wider society, in as much the same way as the inclusion of disabled children currently is.

8.4 Economic considerations

What might distinguish Cyprus from what some literature suggests, is the fact that integration was not used as a means to save money. This is because special education was at its incipient stages, and there were not many special schools that their closure would have saved substantial amounts of money. Even after the 1999 Legislation not a single special school closed. On the contrary, as one of the respondents suggested, it seems that “they are here to stay”.

It is indubitable, however, that Economic considerations played a crucial role in the struggles for the creation of the new legislation. Before the final resolution of the Parliament and the subsequent voting of the 1999 Law, the Legislative document has been constantly subjected to alterations since 1995. The first Legislative document that went to the Parliament and was based on the suggestions of Constantinides Report (1992), indicated that the intervention of the state should start at the birth of the child. This was considered expensive and as a result, the legislative document was returned for amendments. In 1997 the amended document indicated that the obligation and thereby, intervention of the state should start at the age of three. This was also considered expensive and returned for the appropriate amendments. In 1998 another legislative document was prepared, which stipulated that the responsibility of the state should start at the age of six.

It can be argued that the latter legislative proposal constituted a kind of anachronism. Not even the legislation of 1979 did stipulate such a late intervention on behalf of the state. As one of the respondents put it:

...intervention of the state at the age of six means...even later intervention than in the 1979 Law, because in that Law the intervention was at the age of five.

Understandably, the state attempted to reduce the outlays to the least possible extent. However, the reductions attempted were erroneously directed at the crucial stages of early intervention, something that would have predictably created insurmountable problems in the future. Economic considerations should be seen in their broader

perspective and not only in their immediate effect. As one politically “detached” respondent succinctly puts it:

If you are obliged to make reductions, you cannot do them in the stages of early intervention. The savings you do at this stage...when you save a pound at this stage you are going to pay a hundred pounds later...Anyway, during the last phase for the voting of the legislation, there have been great struggles and a compromise had taken place between the state and the other interested parties...for intervention at the age of three.

Moreover the same respondent indicated that even though they repetitively attempted to persuade the government that in the long term, it was financially more viable to lessen the age of early intervention, the attempts were brought to nought. This is because policies in Cyprus are not “rationalised” in the sense that the procedures and the system do not function appropriately. As he argues:

I consider as a matter of principle to have inclusion because it is the right of the children. But if this does not persuade you as politicians, do it for financial reasons, I told them... I will give you an example. A child who is in a segregated place, costs roughly £1200 per month, a child who is in general education, even if you also consider the support, costs £1200 per year...Just estimate if a child has not early intervention, it will cost 1200 for 12 months and for 50 or 60 years...Then they started to understand that they cannot save money in this way...However, you cannot compare Cyprus with the UK. I may estimate the difference and say you are going to pay the money later but when the financial burden is on the family and when there are not institutions, when there is not a welfare state, in the final analysis it is the same for them. [They say] If we had a welfare state it would have cost us this much but because we don't have this...parents and grandparents will take care of the child, someone else will pay the money....

Eventually early intervention starts at the age of three and not earlier, with the justification that this is the earliest age that the responsibility of the Ministry of Education starts. This is attributed to certain institutional conditions, namely it is reminiscent of certain colonial statutes, which prescribe that until the age of three, children should be under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Services. Thus, the Ministry of Education absconded itself from any responsibilities.

Vested interests are also implicated in this complex situation and according to one articulate interviewee:

Not only did the Ministry of Work attempt to pass the responsibility of children to the Ministry of Education, but also demanded to assume the responsibility of the children until the age of five... we had to fight against this as well... The Minister of Labour and Social Insurance declared that if we could prove that children between the age of 3-5 are educable, he did not want them. We had to persuade him that children are not elephants.... This has, of course, to do with resources, he wanted to get more resources, without offering anything... The pre-nursery schools (0 to 3) that are under the auspices of the Welfare Office are in hideous conditions. And I feel sorry for the parents who are obliged to leave their children there....

Whilst trying to be more explicit, the same respondent referred to the historical and political conjunctures that empowered the Minister to claim the responsibility of children above the age of three. It is essential that economic considerations should also be analysed in conjunction with an array of other interconnected and reciprocally related parameters. Thus, whilst talking about the Minister of Labour and Social Services, one respondent pointed out the following:

...thirteen years in a Ministry is an empire, it is not a ministry... During the period that the minister wanted to extend from the age of three to five it has been in a period... that he could "gobble" other ministries. And certainly during that period the Minister of Education was not only reserved in nature but she was also the only female minister... I have not seen a woman in the public sphere of Cyprus who has not been persecuted and eventually beaten... She has been weak in many respects... as a Minister and she could not resist the imperial attitude of the Minister of Labour. We were near to "lose" the children, something that was not a small thing. Undoubtedly, had it not been for the university we would have lost the children. We argued in the newspapers, we made the nursery student teachers react, we published articles, we provided arguments to POED (The pan-cyprian organization of public primary and nursery school teachers) to demand them...

A senior member of the government also mentioned the feud between the two Ministries and the problems that still exist. Another knowledgeable respondent whilst trying to explicate the reasons why the children under the age of three are still under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, he explained that it has starkly to do with vested interests as well as with the inability to change certain stipulations of the constitution that have been consolidated since the period of the colonization in Cyprus. It is interesting to quote the following:

When I asked why you do not change this [the age that the Ministry of Education can assume responsibility for children under the age of three], apart from the fact that there are vested interests in it, in the sense that the Minister of Labour would have been more powerful, it was the constitution of 1960, which we cannot change because if we change it, the balance of the Cyprus democracy is disturbed [as a bi-communal state] Do you understand? . Thus, if the Cyprus problem is solved we might be able to make another kind of arrangement unless we will be stuck to another constitution that we cannot change... This is true, I think it is not difficult to change it but perhaps this might have been used as an excuse to a certain extent...

An additional institutional impediment, which according to two incumbents impacted, along with the economic considerations on the amendments of the legislative documents, is the fact that nursery education is not institutionalised in Cyprus, namely it is not part of the aegis of the government. For instance, the unwillingness of the government to assume responsibility of disabled children at the age of three was due to the lack of public nursery education that was able to satisfy the stipulations of the Law. This, however, is again, albeit indirectly, related to economic considerations, since the government is not ready to assume the financial responsibility for the function of pre-primary education. This being the case, one of the respondents pointed out the following:

The government cannot intervene in private and community nursery schools and ask them for example, to decrease their numbers, so as to better cater for disabled children, without giving them any financial support. In the few cases that the nursery schools are public, intervention starts from the age of 3.

Interestingly, a respondent within the Ministry of Education, expressed the view that in the future, the European Union might solve this problem, in the sense that the government might be obliged to allocate a certain amount of money to local education authorities, which in turn will distribute the money to individual private schools to cater for the needs of disabled children. Another drawback of the situation is that the Ministry does not have the jurisdiction and the mechanism to check the qualifications that the staff of a private or a community infant or nursery schools have. Both respondents commented on the deplorable situations of these schools and referred to cases whereby the parents of children complained about their bad organization and lack of expediency.

A senior member of the teachers' organization acknowledged the fact that had it not been for the economic considerations the Law would have been far better. Economic considerations are also evinced after the voting of the 1999 Law. Financial considerations preclude the proper implementation of the Law. Many respondents acknowledge the fact that the decision for the Law was taken without taking into consideration the huge economic responsibilities of the state for its implementation. As member of the Educational Committee of the Parliament put it:

Until the Law it [the education of disabled children] was a matter of social concern. With this Law it endorsed a new view that it was the responsibility of the state, despite the fact that it was a common knowledge that the state might not have the potential...Decisions were taken without considering the inadequate economic resources...It is characteristic that from the first day that the Law was voted, everybody said that the ministry had to make a great effort to implement it. And some years later we still ask the same thing...

The cost for the implementation of the Law was discussed with the Ministry of Finance from 1999 to 2001. The Ministry of Education was in constant correspondence with the Ministry of Finance in order to have its consent for additional personnel, because until then the Ministry had no idea regarding the additional costs ensued by the voting of the new legislation. It is important to state, that since the first legislative document proposed by the government and sent to the parliament, the number of personnel increased by four times and therefore, after the voting of the Law, the Ministry of Finance should have been informed and consented about the ensuing additional costs. A very influential policy actor pointed out that economic considerations are the primary reason for concern. As he stated:

...economic considerations affect everything... everything is measured against the cost it might have. We are currently in a low budget period in Cyprus and the message is to lower the cost whenever this is possible

Notwithstanding, however, the above consideration, another prominent respondent, pointed out that if we waited until the necessary preparations were made, we would probably have never made the Law. As the matters currently stand, however, the number of special needs coordinators appointed is woefully inadequate as the increase of the personnel is being implemented in phases. Due to their limited number there are many problems. The state, however, insists that it is not financially feasible to

increase their number and there are currently proposals, as two of the respondents said, to pass special needs coordinators' responsibilities to teachers. This is, however, something that is basically against the spirit of the Law, which envisions that a certain amount of special needs coordinators would supervise the implementation of the Law and coordinate the work of teachers, psychologists and speech-therapists.

Thus as one non-governmental policy actor stated:

The 1990 legislation is based on the role of special needs coordinators and I said; You cannot have four special needs coordinators. How are they expected to do all the things needed? According to our experience from other systems a special needs coordinator might be able to be responsible for fifty or even one hundred children but not more. How is he going to supervise them? Go to see the special needs coordinators. They are mad because you cannot have the responsibility of four hundred children. You do not even know their names. You know nothing...And now that they are discussing changes in the Law... they try...to have shortcuts. They say that the special needs coordinators cannot bear the burden...so the teacher should take it up...However, the philosophy of the Law is not ungrounded when it says that there should be somebody to supervise the procedures...It is not a matter of changing the philosophy of the Law...

Evidently, even though the minimum necessary amount was allocated it was not enough to provide the necessary infrastructure for the realisation of the Law. A senior member of the Pancyprian Association of Teachers asserted that despite the political will both on behalf of the government and political parties, financial considerations play a crucial role in these endeavours. As he put it :

Everything is translated to economic considerations. We know, and the Ministry knows what we have to do, or what we aim to do, but everything is put against financial considerations, that is what we can do, because that is the money we have...

In a similar vein, another respondent who used to be a very influential policy actor, referred to the centralised system adopted by the Cyprus government and the impediments this poses to the recruitment and better utilisation of financial resources concerned, since everything is decided centrally by the Ministry of Finance. Thus as he states:

The Cyprus state is influenced by the ex Eastern states. There is a strange situation in Cyprus. While in all respects we are a liberated state... as far as the governance is concerned, we have a centralised system like that of the

eastern countries...The allocation [of money] is centralised and therefore internally [within the Ministry of Education] you cannot do the moves you want. You are obliged to have the consent of each minister of finance....and the accountants understand only numbers...but they are the key and you have to persuade them...

Nevertheless, it seems that there are also the opposite views that purport that the greater impediments for the implementation of the Law are not related to economic considerations. Some respondents seem to espouse the necessity to avoid a “resource driven analysis” of inclusion (Slee 1993) and bring to the surface the impact that ideological and socio-political dynamics have on educational policymaking.

For instance a key member of a Disability Association, having acknowledged the big number of professionals appointed in special education, poignantly points out that the results are disproportionate to the huge number of professionals appointed. As he stated:

I feel sorry because we invest lots of money and we do not see the results we should have seen...With the money we invest and so many educators we should have excellent results...I assure you that we have many educators to help children with special needs in schools, but when one wants to become the coordinator of the coordination then there are no results, and there is a problem...

In much the same way, another actively involved incumbent pointed out that the problem might not lie entirely on economic considerations since the government appeared quite generous in the allocation of educators. As he stated:

I do not underestimate the fact that the state has been generous, it has appointed many educators in Special Education but I am not sure if the organizational arrangements have been the best solution.

Similarly one respondent appointed in a key position at the Ministry of Education also acknowledged the fact that he is sceptical whether the personnel appointed in schools are utilized appropriately and made the following suggestion for the improvement of the current state of affairs:

It is a matter of discussion whether the personnel appointed are utilized. This is something that needs investigation and there are thoughts for it... It has

been already approved, after the last meeting of the parliament, the creation of an unofficial committee that is not covered by the Law, in order to monitor the implementation of the Law and among other things to investigate the utilization of the personnel.

More succinctly, another knowledgeable governmental actor made the observation that most of the problems are created by the unwillingness of the educators to accept disabled children in schools and not by the lack of economic resources to support inclusion. The following testimony is indicative of the ways that economic considerations are conceived as of secondary importance:

Some years ago, it was the general educators that were responsible for disabled children in Cyprus. We neither had LSA nor the special education personnel that we now have and special education was going well. Now, given the additional personnel, we should have had incredible progress but this is not the case, because as educators we “pull our tail outside” and when a child has a problematic behaviour, we suggest an LSA, we involve the parents, we agitate the whole school, and the child is marginalized. And in some cases I ask “how would you react as an educator if this was your own child?” We have seen many times what is happening under the table...

Evidently, economic consideration is a single parameter within an entangled network of reciprocal relations within which integrative attempts are taking place. The allocation of financial resources might prove of little significance when they are mono-dimensionally considered and when other important parameters remain unexamined. As Barton (1996;29) urges, it is of crucial importance not to “underestimate the serious, complex and contentious nature of issues involved in the pursuit of inclusive policies and practices”.

8.5 The creation of the current legislative framework

Undeniably the most important parliamentary decision has been the voting of the 113(I)1999 Law and the subsequent Regulations of 185(I) 2001 and 186(I) 2001 that are concerned with the inclusion of disabled children within mainstream settings. There are stipulations within the Law that abolish all the previous Laws and White Papers, something that undoubtedly renders the voting of the Law as the most important parliamentary decision. The current role of the parliament is to monitor the

implementation of the Law and they recently pressed the Ministry of Education to provide research in order to evaluate the implementation process.

The introduction of current Law is regarded as a positive step forward and constitutes an important policy landmark for a better inclusive practice. Nevertheless, despite the statutory progress achieved, one very prominent respondent expressed the view that had the 1999 Law been voted ten years earlier, there would have been ample time to monitor its implementation and proceed to the necessary changes of the Law. This view was expressed as an alternative response to the constant alterations that the Law was subjected to for ten years prior to its implementation something that delayed the earlier voting of the Law. Simultaneously, one other powerful social actor, acknowledged the fact that whilst we have been ambitious enough to formulate a very good legislation, we have thought very little about the implementation process, and expressed the fear that in this way we bypass the little, albeit important, things that we could have done in order to facilitate the implementation process and focus on distant, elusive and thereby difficult to achieve goals.

Some of the respondents pointed out the fact that there have been so many discussions and modifications prior to the voting the Law, that the voting of the Law was a relatively smooth process. A senior member of the Parliament provided us with the White Papers that have been subjected to alterations for a couple of years, which reflect the “hard bargaining” of different powerful social actors. Indeed the voting of the current Law has been a historic parliamentary decision. There has not been much discussion on the day of the voting of the Law, not only because there has been a general agreement, but because as one key parliamentary policymaker emphatically stated, it was politically correct and therefore it was beyond any further discussions. The excerpt reads as follows:

It was a matter... almost a matter of political necessity, namely it has been politically correct and it had to be voted. Nobody had anything to say apart that we did it very late...And the criticism that followed...because there has been criticism by the opposing political party to the Minister of Education for a long time, I have to say it was not a substantial criticism, in a philosophical level concerning the special education policy, but it was for material and technical shortages. For example there was a fuss because the classroom of a physically disabled child was on the first floor and there was not a lift...

A respondent who was actively implicated in the struggles that preceded the voting of the Law, referred to another crucial parliamentary discussion that necessitated the voting of the 1999. The discussion took place in 1996 and cast implacable criticism at the absence of any governmental support towards disabled children. In particular the discussion concentrated on Radiomathon, the annual charity event that aims to provide financial support to disabled children and their advocates. As the following quotation suggests:

There has been a crucial parliamentary discussion that pressed the State to assume its responsibilities and it has been implacably against Radiomathon and the actions of banks and other companies to raise money for disabled children...There has been a virulent opposition because it was apparent that the Cypriot society tackled a problem that the state was responsible for. Secondly, these kinds of initiatives were eventually a kind of advertisement of these organizations rather than being for the benefit of these children. Thirdly, there was scepticism because there has not been an equal distribution of money in the sense that there was created a privileged category of children that benefited whereas the others did not...

Despite the concerns expressed regarding the subjugating power of the charity event, Radiomathon still thrives and constitutes disabled people as pitiful and dependent creatures. The “micro-technologies of power” imposed on disabled children are “rationalised” and obscured by the economic benefits that disabled people receive. In this respect, disabled people are obliquely constituted as passive receptacles of the benevolent humanitarianism and fail to emancipate themselves from the “technologies of power” and engage with the “technologies of self”, which according to Foucault (1990;18) , enable the “ individuals to effect a certain number of operations on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves, in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom”

In general terms, some of respondents characterized the stipulations of the current Law as “excellent”, and indicated that the problems exist in the implementation process rather than in the legislation per se. On the other hand, however, other respondents acknowledge the shortcomings of the current Law per se, in spite of the progress achieved so far. The problems primarily emanate from the time-consuming

and complicated procedures as well as the stifling timetables stipulated by the Law. These considerations reverberate Thomas and Loxley (2001) concerns regarding the intense proceduralism and bureaucracy that characterise most of special education Laws and the problems that ensued.

As far as the current “movers and shakers” of educational policymaking, most of the respondents referred to the Minister of Education, as well as the General Directors of Primary and Secondary Education, along with some other people in the Ministry. The bulk, however, of special education is under the aegis of primary education and as a respondent indicated, the General Director of Primary Education, who used to be a special needs inspector, can be currently characterised as the key policy actor.

A member of the Educational Committee of the Parliament whilst assessing the current decision making centres, commented that it should have been better if there was a separate special education service with a general director or a consulting committee with people with expediency, who would be in a position to advise the minister. It was also noted that there are always public discussions, taking into considerations the views of voluntary organizations.

As far as the role of activists within the disability movement, another member of the Educational Committee of the Parliament stated that there are some organizations of the blind and the deaf that are well organized and they participate in many discussions for social policy formation. This, however, does not apply to the same extent in the discussions for educational policy formation, in spite of the fact that the Educational Committee of the Parliament involves the members of these organizations in its discussions. This, according to another well-informed respondent can be attributed to the following factors:

Firstly, disabled people organised very late as they were represented by professionals...Secondly, within a system like ours the way they have been organised is competitive between them and for that reason they haven't achieved what parental organisations achieved so far...They have not managed to unify so as to be a powerful assemble in order to have results. They are fragmented and they compete against each other for a few financial resources...

A former important policymaker of the governmental terrain also expressed the view that disabled people had so many living problems that their claims were directed to the solution of their immediate problems and their struggles were not directed to the accomplishment of the “technologies of the self”. As he states:

...they were not oriented to achieve general goals.... Their immediate problems usually were financial because they wanted to acquire a wheelchair, they wanted an allowance, a Christmas present, a car for the disabled...

Finally, a very influential social actor suggested that the participation of these organizations in policy formation could be enhanced if the Ministry of Education created advisory bodies, which would include some members of these organizations with the responsibility to monitor the implementation of the 1999 Law.

8.6 The impact of E.U

One of the most audacious respondents was adamant to say that everything that happened in Cyprus regarding special education was because we wanted to present a nice picture of Cyprus to the European Union. All the attempts were directed to the embellishment of the surface of special education policy, so as to look like the other western European countries and achieve our accession to the Union something that was accomplished on the 1st of May 2004.

It was also noted, that even though the E.U has not provided explicit directions, it has provided the general framework within which inclusive educational policymaking should be placed. It is anticipated that in the future, when Cyprus will be a full member of the E.U, the impact will be greater. It is expected that the E.U will provide specific stipulations regarding special education, whereby the countries should abide by them. At the present as a member of the Educational Service stated, the E.U gives ample space to the countries to decide their own procedures and policies. The impact of the E.U, however, is according to the same interviewee more evident in indirect ways:

The abolition of boundaries and when people travel in ease from one country to the other, they can be easily informed on what is happening in other countries and therefore it is through this indirect ways that the policies we have will be affected.

Another respondent stressed the direct future impact of the E.U and expressed his anticipation that Cyprus will have to move forward in order to be in alignment with the stipulation of the E.U as far as inclusive education policy and practice is concerned. In particular,

I foresee that there will be developments regarding special education not only at the University but also within the ministry, which can no longer remain with the 1999 Special Education Act, but it should reach to the full coverage of disabled children's human rights in the same way as it does with other children.

This said, it is acknowledged that there is still a long way to statutorily establish inclusion as a matter of entitlement to these children. The current Law, despite beguiling rhetoric, is not informed by a humans rights discourse as the inclusion of children rests on contingent and provisional terms. Within the interplay of unequal power relations, disabled children are constituted and manipulated according to the “will to truth” of the powerful few who “determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination” (Foucault 1990;18), thereby giving emphasis to children’s needs rather than rights.

As far as the economic impact of the E.U is concerned, it was stated that it is not anticipated that Cyprus would receive any financial assistance insofar as income per capital is very high. If however there would be a solution of the Cyprus problem, the income per capital will decrease, and then Cyprus would definitely have access to other European economic resources. One of the university-based respondents expressed the hope that there might also be more money for research.

Moreover, according to one parliamentary member there would definitely be economic assistance for the development of human resources. Even though this outlay is not directly related to schools, the money can be used within the communities in order to enhance the possibilities for the creation of an inclusive discourse within the whole society.

Simultaneously, another incumbent within the Ministry of Education pointed out, that Cyprus will have to follow all the future stipulations of E.U regarding special education and stressed the importance of participating in European committees that will offer new guidelines and new perspectives regarding special education. For instance, the same respondent said that Cyprus has already been accepted on such a committee, the “European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education”, in which he will be the representative of Cyprus. Similarly, a special needs inspector indicated that it is now necessary to participate in E.U funded programmes and referred to one of these that is going to be held in Cyprus, whereby twelve experts from other European countries will have the chance to be informed regarding special education in Cyprus and express their comments and suggestions. This is especially true for certain issues that have not yet been touched upon in Cyprus like the work placement of disabled people, or other issues that are in their incipient stages, like special education in secondary and tertiary education.

It is worth noting that four months later during the second phase of interviewing, one of the respondents within the Ministry of Education referred to the success of that particular programme and suggested that the experts left with the best impressions regarding the special education policy of the Ministry.

Last but not least, another respondent expressed the hope that the accession of Cyprus to Europe would bring political stability to the island, as well as democracy. In consequence, the fear and the insecurity that people now feel and affects many facets of their existence, will gradually disperse.

Whilst acknowledging that educational policymaking is indeed a constellation of variegated and intertwined events, it is interesting to provide the general institutional framework within which special education policymaking is taking place. The “will to truth” of the most powerful social actors is materialised through the institutional infrastructure of a socio-political system. In turn, the institutionalised regimes and routines facilitate the transformation of the “will to truth” to the “will to power” (Foucault cited in Merquir 1985), thereby formulating and perpetuating the powerful cycle of domination and subordination.

It was generally acknowledged that the standard of Cyprus' anti-discrimination legislation is satisfactory and comparable with other European countries. As far as the impact of Constitution on educational policymaking is concerned, Article 5 of the Constitution includes stipulations related to human rights and fundamental freedoms. Part II of the constitution also sets a wide range of human rights among which, the right to education, the right to a decent existence and social security and the right of equality before the Law. Moreover, justice is guaranteed to any person without direct or indirect discrimination (Article 28).

Notwithstanding, however, these stipulations, much seems to remain at a rhetorical level. In practice, the welfare state and its relevant institutions are non-existent. Disabled people and their advocates, not only have to fight for their rights within unfavourable conditions, but they also did not have other role models who have already struggled and won their rights for equality and non-discrimination; like feminist or black people movements. Disabled people had to start "ex nihilo" in a context that has never encountered anything similar before.

8.7 Inclusion- Segregation in disguise?

The 1999 Special Education Act provided the legislative basis for the integrative attempts that were unofficially taking place during the last few years. The spirit of the Law as reflected in the rhetorical proclamations, espouses the tenets of an inclusive discourse. Inclusion is thus regarded as a matter of entitlement for disabled children and as a major responsibility of the state. How far, however, rhetoric colludes with reality? Do the rhetorical proclamations envisioned by the Law have any significance or do they just dwindle to meaningless and empty utterances?

Despite the fact that some of the respondents support the 1999 Law, they acknowledge that in practice we are far from the realization of an inclusive discourse. What is interesting however, is the fact that inclusion does not mean the same thing for everyone, thus vindicating once more that: "there is no single national perspective on inclusion or any aspect of education. Perspectives differ almost as much within as between countries"(Booth 2003;256). Going even further, it can be argued that

perspectives differ and contradictions are evident not only between but also within individuals thereby indicating the elusive and muddled ways that inclusion is conceptualised. Key policymakers' "regimes of truth", pertaining to special education, are thus characterised by "discursive multiplicity" (Taylor 2004) in the sense that their discursive realities are blurred, ambiguous and contradictory. The discursive multiplicity evinced in policymakers' narratives, is both the result and the reason of an equally ambiguous, vague and contentious Legislation.

For some of the respondents inclusion is nothing more than a new, more sophisticated name of special education whereby the segregating practices continue to thrive in disguised forms. Even though some of them express the view that inclusion means the non-provisional and non-contingent co-education of disabled children with their peers, others envision and articulate inclusion essentially as a more "inconspicuous" means of segregation, embellished with a more inclusive lexicon. Not surprisingly then "axiomatically one person's continuum of inclusion is another's euphemism of exclusion" (Slee 2001a;387). The blurred and heteroglossic discursive reality of key policy actors is the effect and concomitantly is the result of the discursively hybrid policy texts that are constituted, reiterating Fairclough (1989;90) by ideologically "diverse discourse types" thereby giving "ample space to manoeuvre" (Slee 2001a;389) to all those who advocate nothing but a distorted and jeopardised inclusion.

It should be noted, however, that some of the interviewees were quite explicit regarding the deplorable ways that inclusive policies are conceptualised and implemented. Simultaneously, some of them readily disavowed the disguised segregating practices of semi-inclusion policies and practices and cast a trenchant criticism to the distorted notion of inclusion prevailing in the Cyprus context. One of the respondents whilst adumbrating inclusive education in Cyprus she contended:

In practice inclusive policies do not mean to do resource units, it does not mean to build walls, it means to demolish walls...Thus we do not even have integration in Cyprus, not inclusion. ..Due to the fact that we did not have a sophisticated special education system like the UK, we were sometimes obliged to have integration...it is not because they recognised disabled children's rights to be in (mainstream) education, it was because they did not know where to put them, something that was also taking place prior to the

1999 Law. And it does not mean that they (children) have provisions in general school, they just co-exist ...

Another knowledgeable respondent also provided a vitriolic account regarding inclusive policies in Cyprus. The following quotation is of considerable interest because it broaches the obvious discrepancy between facile rhetoric and reality:

Everybody agrees that there should be inclusion, but it is not a matter of administrative decision, we do not wake up one morning and we say we do inclusion of children. This should be done in a systematic and methodological way. I have the opinion that things in Cyprus did not happen this way. We have seen that this is [inclusion] happening elsewhere and we have decided to do it without examining if there are the necessary infrastructure and organizational preconditions

In much the same way another quite independent, yet powerful, observer of the current situation, attested to the gloomy picture of inclusive education pointing out that the government does not do much in order to facilitate the realisation of an inclusive discourse. In particular he stated the following:

I think that the government does not promote inclusion. The system does the opposite, namely it might do it rhetorically but in practice it does quite the opposite.

The gloomy “policyscape” is also reflected in the testimony of another respondent appointed in a key position within the Ministry of Education and Culture:

The experiences I had are not optimistic and encouraging at all. For example I have seen special classrooms in schools, which are utterly isolated, unsuitable, inhospitable ...and the least equipped ones. If we simply say that children are included in a school but spend most of the time within such bare and isolated rooms, then yes we have created a second prison and inclusion is only in the name.

Even worse than the abovementioned considerations, it has been also pointed out that there are still cases of children with severe problems, who cannot be accepted in certain schools, because there are not, so it is claimed, appropriate educators to cater for their educational needs. As a result, the parents of these children have to travel far from their homes to find a school to accept their children.

Notwithstanding, however, the concerns regarding the flawed ways that inclusion is conceptualised and implemented, the general trends of the majority of the interviewees have been towards a jeopardised inclusion. Respondents, in essence, find recourse to a contemporary and novel segregating discourse thus reducing inclusion to a re-articulated special education artefact. Although respondents talk about the “gaps” in the implementation of the Law, the “remedy” is not sought in the system, but it is again sought in the supposed “deficiencies” of disabled children who might not be able, as claimed, to survive within such a competitive education system. Inclusion in this way is reduced, as Armstrong (2005;147) so pertinently writes, “to a disciplinary force, regulating the lives of those disabled by their lack of a utilitarian value to the interests of an individualised society.”

One very influential actor within the parliament who has been in the forefront for the voting of the current Law, stated the following:

Undoubtedly 20 years ago the orientation of special education has been entirely different than it is now. The era that it was considered that disabled children should be hidden or isolated in impersonal institutions has irretrievably gone. Thus, we do not advocate their removal [from ordinary schools], but we say that in cases that it is necessary for them to be in a separate place, because they really need this specialised place of education, this should be done. We should not sacrifice everything in the name of inclusion...and occasionally to infringe the rights of the other normal children.

The respondent mono-dimensionally refers to the rights of non-disabled children without bearing in mind the equivalent rights of disabled children to be included in mainstream settings. By no means should their inclusion be considered as a sacrifice or a privilege to be “earned” (Rioux 2000;214). Rather, their inclusion should be unambiguously regarded as a matter of entitlement. Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000;223) are explicit on the necessity to forge a link between children’s human rights and inclusion.

Those who promote “inclusive education” must be convinced of the human rights foundation and be prepared to assert it plainly and publicly if there is to be genuine progress toward equality for all children and their families. By failing to assert the right of the individual child we undermine the credibility of the campaign for the human rights of all children. We cannot hide behind the ‘illusion of choice’...

Another key policy actor also expressed similar concerns. In particular

... I believe that special schools should not cease to exist because it is impossible that all children can be in ordinary schools, not because we do not want them, but, as the matters stand, it will be wrong for them and for the other children...

It is also indicative to quote another influential government based policymaker:

...due to the fact that nowadays school is called to be especially competitive and effective, it starts to emerge a problematic to what extent this is the best choice, namely to get (disabled children) in general schools... and every school has to be in the position to create the necessary conditions of infrastructure...it seems that we don't have the potential to do this yet. It is necessary to put great effort and secondly, without wanting to say that (disabled children) should return to segregated schools, it has started to grow up a problematic, whether some of these schools should be specialised, and to have better infrastructure, installations, to create a tradition.

He further insisted and reinforced his position by stating:

What makes me to ponder is whether Cyprus should have its own model of integration and for the inclusion of these children, namely sometimes it is a matter of statistical sizes. I am not sure if it is feasible in the foreseeable future to prepare all schools and probably all teachers in order to do correctly this job. May be it would be better, taking into consideration the particular numbers, to see if it would be beneficial a kind of "specialization" Many serious situations [of disabled children] are in environments that cannot handle them and sometimes they take away the chances that the other children with fewer problems might have....

In the same vein, another respondent appointed within the Ministry, expressed his own views regarding the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream schools. He presented a very sophisticated diagram which is explicitly predicated on the assumption that disabled children's placement either in mainstream or special schools, should be made according to their needs or in other words, according to their deficiencies. Based on this, he indicated that the most important problem with the

Law is that it is very difficult to send a child to a special school due to parental negation and resistance.

The legitimacy of segregation is made on the grounds, as the same respondent stated, that these children do not get any benefit from ordinary schools, something that is against the philosophy of the Law that talks about their functional integration in schools. As he states:

At the end we reach a situation when we have disabled children in mainstream schools.... and whilst the philosophy of functional integration talks about physical coexistence, social integration and academic participation, only one of these parameters is achieved, for example, the physical....The social for me is more important, you may have the most depressed child [in ordinary school] and because his father wants him to be in an ordinary school he appeals and we take the child back to the ordinary school just to co-exist...

Instead of referring to the problems of the school culture and its inability to respond to children with variegated developmental trajectories, the blame is placed on the parents who are forced to claim through litigation what is supposed to be an entitlement to their children. The pathologizing view is not only directed to disabled children but also to their parents and the actions they undertake in order to reinstate their children's human rights. Everything is to be blamed but the system itself.

It is evident that disabled children are regarded as a major threat to "resourceful individuals" who are the significant ones to benefit from the "cult of individualism" that prevails and is constantly promoted within the education system and society in general. The market-driven forces within the educational apparatuses are supposed to raise standards and efficiency whilst concomitantly issues of equality, human rights and social justice are marginalized (Bottery 2000; Barton 1999; Apple 2001a). Simultaneously, inclusion loses its essence and meaning as it is conceptually and pragmatically distorted and manipulated according to one's regimes of truth and vested interests. These respondents according to Slee and Weiner (2001; 94):

...accept assumptions about the artefact of measurable intelligence, and describe educational failure in terms of individual shortcomings (Kauffman and Hallaham 1995) Their main aim is to support special needs students as they struggle to adopt to the demands of traditional schools and classrooms.Inclusive education is a normalising quest-it is an assimilationist

imperative. It is significant that claims for inclusion remain conditional; terms such as ‘least restrictive environment’ or ‘most appropriate setting’ are retained for expert adjudication.

Even respondents whose statements might at first instigate an aura of optimism in the sense that they seem to espouse the tenets of inclusion eventually expose a blurred and nebulous discursive reality regarding integration issues. The discourses that influence their “will to truth” are muddled and contradictory. Thus in spite of the fact that they expressed statements that indicated not only that they were quite aware of the tenets regarding an inclusive discourse but also that they espoused these tenets, their overall statements, apart from two respondents, were contradictory and reflected a blurred philosophy. This observation led to the conjecture that what prevails around inclusion is indeed, reiterating Norwich’s (2000) term, an “ideological impurity”, not only between respondents’ views but also within their individual views.

It is not ethically correct, however, to use ideological or linguistic impurity as an excuse to jeopardise inclusion and reduce it to semi-inclusive models as many attempt to do. Indeed, we should need to keep bearing in mind that the realisation of an inclusive discourse is a difficult and disturbing task (Barton 1997;232), but it becomes even more difficult, when we attempt to fuse antithetical discourses (Slee 2001a) and provide inclusive models informed by special education imperatives. As far as inclusion is concerned there is definitely no room for complacency (Barton 2004).

An example of a respondent characterised by muddled philosophy, is a very prominent governmental incumbent whose previous quotation and his reference to “the necessary infrastructural and organizational preconditions” by no means does insinuate rearrangements in order to facilitate inclusion. Rather, as later proved, he insinuates that the suggested rearrangements should be directed to the creation of regional schools with expertise in order to cater better for disabled children. His “rearrangements” are starkly predicated on the psycho-medical discourse whereby “defective” children should be “rearranged” in regional schools whereby they will receive expert advice and “remedy”.

Moreover, it is also interesting to quote another very prominent policymaker actor whose thoughts mirror his muddled and contradictory discursive reality regarding inclusion:

*I primarily consider that the aim,... to the most possible degree, should be that disabled children would feel an inseparable part of a process, if children feel that this school is theirs as well, and they don't feel that they are now taken to the school that others go, the aim would be achieved. However, when somebody thinks it and tries to be objective..., it comes to mind that it is impossible to achieve everything...It is never possible, however we want it, for these children to have all the advantages that other children have, **from schools and procedures that are made for the others**...The aim should have been, at the least degree that ordinary school life is disturbed, for these children to feel part of this process [my emphasis].*

Thus on the one hand the necessity of disabled children to “feel an inseparable part of a process” is expounded and extolled and on the other hand the segregation of them is supported on the grounds of their “best interests” whilst mainstream education and culture is to be preserved for the selected and privileged few. The above respondent is explicit when referring to the inability of disabled children to survive within “schools and procedures made **for others**”. The policymaker’s discursive reality regarding mainstream schooling is imputed by “...the constraint of conformity that must be achieved...traces the limits that will define difference.. the external reference of the abnormal” (Foucault 1977;182). This said, the respondent did not understand that the essence of inclusion rests on the fact that “schools and procedures should be made **for all**” something that can be only achieved by the radical restructuring of schools and their procedures to accommodate the diversity of the school population. Unless schools cease to function as the procrustean bed of Greek mythology, disabled children, along with many others of the school population, will never make it in mainstream schools.

Even in cases whereby the respondents are supposed to be positioned in favour of radical educational changes in order to achieve the realisation of an inclusive discourse, their “will to truth” is deflected and subverted by the individual pathology perspectives. For example, a very influential respondent whilst pointing out the inability of the educators to conceptualise the meaning of the words in the Law, thus indicating not only the power inherent in language but also the multiple ways that a

policy text can be read within the education system, his focus is ultimately placed upon children's special needs that constitute the presumable "substance" of the Law. The articulation of a seemingly positive concern is jeopardised by the power of language to convey and uphold assumptions of "special needs". As evinced from the following quotation:

...Every word, I assure you, that what there is in the Law, when we prepared it, has its meaning. Unfortunately our educators do not want to understand the "substance" of the situation, namely when we say that a child should receive individual assistance according to his special needs, we meant it and we insisted to the parliament that it should have been included in the Law and in the Rules afterwards. As far as I realise this is not what is happening...(my emphasis).

Finally it is interesting to note that further to the abovementioned considerations, in cases where the ideological confusion is not evident, it seems that some respondents regard inclusion as an ideology by itself, in its pejorative sense whereby inclusion is considered as a utopian concept. This echoes Bratlinger's (1997) concerns, regarding the pejorative meanings that are assigned to the word. She refers to the so-called anti-inclusionists, who characterize inclusion as an ideology, as a utopian concept. (see Kauffman and Hallahan 1995, Fuchs and Fuchs 1994). In much the same way, a key policymaker refers to inclusion as "a great ideology" and thereby as an unachievable and romantic goal. The whole quotation reads as follows:

..... basically until 1999 we were talking about integration, not inclusion, neither now, actually, do we talk about inclusion. It is a big ideology to be implemented however hard we might try...To be honest I don't think that inclusion is a feasible thing to achieve...

The above quotation reflects a limited vision, a contingent and provisional as well as a loose commitment to inclusion. Inclusion, among other things, requires an enlarged vision and a warm-hearted commitment to an achievable goal. Believing that inclusion is ideological is like a self-fulfilling prophecy, which is undoubtedly doing a disservice to the attempts for the realization of an inclusive discourse.

Inclusion, as it has been previously evinced and discussed, is mostly perceived as a conditional, and provisional process, which more or less, should not challenge the

well being of other children in the mainstream schools. Thus, disabled children who are often the victims of a hostile mainstream school environment become the culprits, as they are nominated as the ones who create the problems for the implementation of the Law.

Inclusive education and the tenets that surround it, is about the education and welfare of all children irrespective of their variegated trajectories of development. It is imperative, therefore, that the implicit and explicit connections of special and inclusive education are jettisoned. Inclusive education is another more descriptive name of effective education. Failure to understand inclusive education is a failure to understand the needs of the whole school population. Moreover, and most importantly, it is a failure to respect and safeguard the human rights of disabled children to participate in a rewarding educational experience in their neighbourhood schools. As Kenworthy and Whittaker (2000; 222) put it:

Ending the segregation of children is above all, a human rights objective...The conviction must be that segregated education is a damaging and archaic practice, incompatible with a civilised society.

Going even further I would suggest that segregation should end in all its configurations, physical, ideological and linguistic if we are to proceed to the realisation of an inclusive discourse. As shown, the cessation of physical segregation is but a tiny component of the discursive agonism over greater inclusion. Linguistic segregation or as Corbett (1996) called it “bad mouthing”, in all its discursive configurations, has a pervasive impact on the entangled network of exclusion and segregation. Therefore, centring upon the linguistic utterances pertaining to inclusion should be an indispensable component of the disassembling critique over special education policy constitution and dissemination.

8.8 The pervasiveness of language; The power to exclude:

Whilst aiming to discover key policy actors’ “will to truth”, it is evident that this “truth” is elusive and thereby, the vision for the realisation of an inclusive discourse becomes blurred and difficult to realise. This is exacerbated by the lack of a common and unambiguous lexicon to incorporate the tenets of inclusion. The vocabulary used

by the respondents is inconsistent and contradictory. It is therefore, crucial to interrogate the hybrid nature of interviewees' utterances and try to make transparent their possible contribution to the emergence of the multifarious discursive entrapments that subvert inclusion. Danziger (1995;439) gives prominence to the necessity to divulge the linguistic obscurity of the ostensibly innocuous linguistic constructs underpinning the policymaking process. As she trenchantly puts it;

The danger is that the invisibility of language-its capacity to presuppositions and even political intentions not only from the listener but from the speaker as well- can have unexpected and dire consequences.

The seemingly untainted regimes of truth conveyed through language are vehemently implicated in the asymmetries of power relations entrenched in the discursive agonism for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Interestingly, and quite paradoxically, the pervasive impact of the linguistic utterances is analogous to their opacity and ostensible innocuous nature.

Even the linguistic predilections of single words are purveyors of the subjugating effects of discourse. Single words are the bearers of meaning, of ideological presuppositions and preferential standpoints that are surreptitiously conveyed, solidified and materialized through discursive processes and practices. For instance, the Greek words *entaxi* (integration) and *ensomatosi* (inclusion) are used indiscriminately by almost all the respondents thereby obscuring their immense and yet subtle, ideological diversion. Actually, only three of the respondents used the word *ensomatosi* as a distinguishable linguistic term thereby drawing a demarcation line between two inherently distinct phenomena.

The muddled ideology is reflected in the muddled terminology and vice versa with profound implications on the ways that inclusive education policy is conceptualised and implemented. This reverberates Slee's (2001b;167) contention that: "The absence of a language of inclusive education that stipulates its vocabulary and grammar increases the risk for political misappropriation".

Serious attention should be thus given to the "ideological and linguistic confusion" that prevails around inclusion issues within the Cyprus context. One very articulate

respondent points out that everything results from the fact that key policy actors misconceive inclusion and merely regard it as a new name for integration or special education. Not surprisingly then, they use all these words interchangeably ignoring their ideological juxtaposition. It is interesting to quote the following for a non-governmental respondent:

Even the people who are implicated, who are stakeholders [in special education] use vocabulary they do not understand. For example, if you ask one of them what is the difference between integration and inclusion, what are they going to tell you? ... They did not take the time to study, ..to think, to be influenced, they do everything mechanically. They use terminology that they do not understand, and they use it interchangeably. For them integration, special education and inclusion are the same. But they are not.

It is also very interesting here to note that one of the respondents who is academically involved in inclusive education used another Greek word for inclusion, namely “simperilipsi” and criticised the use of the word “ensomatosi”, which if it is linguistically analysed is inappropriate to describe inclusion. In particular he provided the following interesting comments:

Inclusion is not translated to the word “enswmatosi”. I use the word “simperilipsi”... . The problem is with the Greek affix “en” that implies to transcend a boundary, and thereby “en-taxi” (integration) means to bring someone from a different group and bring him (sic) to this group. Thus the concept presupposes that the person belongs to a separate group. The same applies for the word “en-somatosi”...

The above quotation depicts the language as a discursive means of power that construes and conveys meanings. Moreover, it vindicates the fact that discourses are not only instantiated in texts (Janks 1997) but also in single words. Indeed, it is not difficult for a native speaker of the Greek language to understand that the affix “en” means the merging of two distinct components thereby implying that disabled children constitute a distinct and small category of children attached to the normal mega-category of children. On the contrary the word “simperilipsi” with the affix “sin” implies an all-encompassing category of equal components

Understandably, unless it is conceptually established and clarified that disabled children are entitled to be given the same chances and benefits as their peers do, then

inclusion will continue to be misinterpreted and substituted by the historical imperatives of special educational thinking, masqueraded under the banner of inclusion. Exclusion is primarily the result of what we might call a conceptual misappropriation of inclusion. Insofar as the notion of inclusion is contingent on an array of exclusionary ideological and institutional dynamics, it will never cease to constitute a rhetorical apparition thereby securing its only, what Slee and Allan (2001;17) call, “ghostly presence” within all arenas of educational policymaking.

8.9 Special education thinking; The exclusionary inclusion

The categorization of disabled and non disabled children is as Armstrong (2002;450) writes a discourse of power “ a mechanism for spatialising procedures which sort people in different sites”. Indeed the period of their widespread isolation has gone, but bad mouthing (Corbett 1996) is still evasively present, whilst their segregation is still ordered in inconspicuous, yet powerful ways. Reiterating Slee (2001b;168) “ the uses and abuses of language frame meanings that disable and exclude.” The reference to the other children as normal, insinuates the abnormality of disabled children who should be segregated for having transgressed the limits of a socially constructed normality. The “panoptic” technologies of control as conceptualised and explicated by Foucault (1977), exercise power through space and hence, through the spatial shifting of disabled children. Once the contours of normality are defined, deviants are put under scrutiny and are subject to an array of normalising processes.

One of the respondents indicated that even though some things have changed, special education imperatives are still visible, albeit under different names and different formations. It is also the case that disabled children are still labelled and considered as “others” who belong to a different pedagogy and perhaps to a different world. According to one of the general special needs coordinators within the Ministry, disabled children are still regarded as “special teachers’ kids”, contrary to the speculations of the Law that indicate that these children are registered and belong to mainstream classrooms. In the same vein, one other respondent referred to a research project undertaken by the University of Cyprus (2003) according to which, disabled

children are regarded with “mercy”, not only from teachers but from their classmates as well. As he pointed out:

... the children with special needs are regarded with mercy both by teachers and fellow pupils. This is essentially incompatible with the spirit of the Law and the attempts on our behalf to vote this Law in order to help children with special needs...Children are within ordinary schools not to be seen with mercy but to be helped so as to have positive results. They should be the future citizens of the Cyprus republic who pay taxes and by no means should receive benefits from the welfare office.

The notion of “mercy” emanates from the charity model of disability that constitutes an inconspicuous and yet a rather pervasive means leading to the oppression and disparagement of disabled children. The sentiments of “mercy” and the paraphernalia of the politics of “non-recognition”, immanent in them, depoliticise the essentially political nature of disability and obscure the human rights dimension of the struggles over greater inclusion. Inexorably interlinked with the medical model of disability, the charity ethic and the notion of mercy inscribed in it, convey the ideology of the “benevolent humanitarianism” whereby disabled people are discursively construed as grateful recipients of whatever constitutes and entitlement to them (Tomlinson 1982; Oliver 1990).

Even worse, it is occasionally the case that mainstream teachers simply do not want disabled children in their classrooms. One respondent commented that if it were up to them many teachers would have unremorsefully excluded a disabled child from their class. The following quotation is indicative of the negative attitudes of some teachers.

In some cases teachers cry because their lesson is disrupted due to hyperactive and disturbing children... The important thing, however, is that teachers should show their love to these children...Wherever the teacher showed this big love the child succeeded. Wherever, however, the teacher has other syndromes; she is anxious to deliver the syllabus, feels that is unfair for the other children because time is wasted then several problems are created. This is a reality. The road is not easy.

This attests to a parent’s testimony reported by Brown (1999;28) whereby the negative attitudes of mainstream teachers are vividly depicted:

I remember being told by a teacher three years ago at our daughter's previous school, "No one wants your daughter in their classroom next year.... The teacher aide told us that the whole staff-room clapped when they learned we are leaving the school... (cited in Ballard 2004; 92).

A key analyst in Cyprus sees this issue of the disabling nature and impact of teachers' attitudes as being so serious that she equates it with "premeditated murder" (Phtiaka 2001:6), since teachers' self-fulfilling prophecies are often realised and are perceptible to children. A related study, along with several other studies, conducted by Devine (1991) shows that children are aware of differences in teacher expectations something that can be detrimental to their self-esteem and self-image (cited in McDonnell 2000).

Understandably, it has not yet been possible to cultivate a philosophy of unequivocal acceptance, simply because the system works against this, as one very influential respondent illustrates:

The government through practical procedures and through the implementation of the law systematically promotes integration. The appropriate assessment of the needs of each child contributes to the development of individual education plan aiming at integration. The allocation of services within the education system, (support from educational psychologists, speech therapists, special teachers), the development and function of structures within ordinary school (resource units and rooms of reference), the development and implementation of programmes like proactive programmes, literacy, early identification and intervention, educational support, special teaching, with the aim of smooth integration...

As it is evinced from the excerpt, respondent's concerns regarding the contribution of the government towards the realisation of an inclusive discourse is confined to the better ways of identification, assessment and treatment of disabled children. The focus is on the needs and deficiencies of the children and the necessity to introduce special measures for their assimilation within ordinary schools. Foucault emphasised the importance of the "normalizing judgement" or normalization in the function of normalising power. Disabled children are placed against an arbitrarily constructed notion of normality and by implication, the "normalizing gaze" places special education practice "into a complex power/knowledge web in which power is exerted over children, whether or not in their (best) interests" (Foucault cited in Marshall 1996:129).

The individualistic and pathologizing gaze negates the needs and thereby deficiencies of the educational system that is wholly unable to respond to the diverse needs of all children. Nothing is said about the need to reconsider the nature of schooling, the curriculum and the teaching styles, along with the exclusionary policies and practices that disparage and marginalize disabled children.

8.10 The position and function of resource units

Resource units is another prime example of the resurgence of special education imperatives whereby disabled children are marginalized and excluded within a supposedly inclusive mainstream setting. Resource units is the technique by which the normalising gaze is exerted as the panoptical technologies of control immanent in this, “increase to a maximum the visibility of those subjected” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982;192). The placement of disabled children in resource units increase their “visibility” within mainstream settings as they constitute “ a centre toward which all gazes would be turned” (Foucault 1977;173).

For Foucault space is crucial in any exercise of power. resource units constitute “.. the spatial ‘nesting’ of hierarchised surveillance...The principle was one of ‘embedding’ (Foucault 1977;171-172). The “embedding” of resource units in mainstream schools increase the level of surveillance exerted on them. Resource units, in this respect, can be understood as part of the institutional central which in Foucault’s (1977;172) terms:

Permit an internal articulated and detailed control to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms an architecture that would operate to transform individuals; to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make possible to know them, to alter them.

In asking about the role of the resource units in ordinary schools and the ways that the attendance of disabled children is managed, it was pointed out that disabled children are mainly in the resource units. The only mainstream classes they usually attend are either Physical Education or Art. It is clearly evident that resource units are starkly oriented to a segregating model, and they do not function as a transitional

mode of education, aimed to facilitate the gradual inclusion of disabled children in ordinary classes.

It can be argued therefore, that the main problem is not the existence of special schools per se. Most alarming of all, is their inconspicuous configuration within mainstream settings. Reiterating, again, one of the respondents:

...the establishment of resource units, is not integration. We do what we did in the 70's when there were resource units in different schools, they closed them, gathered the children and put them in the special schools. And now we re-create resource units...under a new legislation and with another name...

Similarly, a key member of a Parents' Association expressed his immense frustration stemming from the fact that the rational and anticipated role of the resource units has been erroneously conceived. He has been explicitly against their current role and pointed out the following:

We did not suggest resource units in order to create special schools within mainstream schools. Basically we do not have inclusion but isolation now...Most probably ordinary children do not play with disabled children because they say that they are "dim witted" or "with special needs" or 'special abilities'.

In another instance, he also stressed:

Special resource units were not initially created to become special schools...within mainstream settings.. The aim has been to create resource units with all the facilities whereby a deaf child can be helped by a professional for the deaf and a blind child by another...so as when he will be included in a maths class to be on an equal basis with the others...When we voted the Law we realised that there have been children aged 8,9, 10 years old who have been already in special schools. In order to enable these children to be included in schools there should have been resource units within which these children who have supposedly "missed the train" [left behind] receive appropriate help...

The segregation within mainstream settings, which disabled children are subjected, accentuates differentiation and contributes to bad labelling. Even the new term of "special abilities" can be seen as a euphemism for failure (Barton 2003) and differentiation, and by no means does it constitute a linguistic progress in terms of "bad mouthing" (Corbet 1996). Children are still stigmatised and labelled and

comprise the “failed” and “inferior” category of pupils that are dumped in resource units, albeit within a so-called inclusive and welcoming school.

It is logical then, to ask in what ways a resource unit based in a mainstream school differs from a segregating setting. In essence, they differ very little in spite of the fact that some hold the view that disabled students can at least socialize with the other children in a mainstream settings. Inclusion however, is not only about socialization, it is also about participation and acceptance. The “otherness” of these children is still accentuated, as they are perceived “the resource-unit” children. Understandably, the realization of an inclusive discourse, presupposes that disabled children are entitled to a proper education and not to an illusory projection of it.

Special education thinking is not, however, only inconspicuously present, but it is also present through its most obvious form, the incarceration of disabled children in special schools. Segregating settings, despite the rhetoric of inclusion, are still thriving and simultaneously, their future does not seem to be threatened in any way. This paradoxical resurgence is alarming and calls for critical consideration and examination of the discourses that inform the current thinking, as far as the education of disabled children is concerned. As one respondent noted:

Special schools have been subjected to a decline regarding the number of students, especially from 1997-2000. Today, however, I cannot say that they have fewer students than in 1990. I can say that there more students, because the state through the identification process increased the students in education, and found out students that were lost, at their homes... As a result, special schools have more children and I can say there are more serious cases than what I remember in special schools ten years ago...

It is possible to characterise the above statement as a twofold sword. On the one hand, it can be held that it is positive, in that more disabled children have access to education, whatever kind this might be. On the other hand, the tenets of inclusion get jeopardized and become merely facile rhetoric. Not only do special schools still exist but as the matters stand, they are only in their incipient stages, and are potentially expected to blossom. By no means should inclusive education leave any room for complacency when its tenets are at stake. As Oliver as early as in 1995 pointed out:

Such has been the extent of this failure that nothing short of a complete deconstruction of the whole enterprise of Special Education will suffice...nothing short of a radical deconstruction of special education and the reconstruction of education in totality will be enough, even if the journey takes us another hundred years... (Oliver 1995;35 cited in Thomas and Vaughan 2004;112-113)

One parliamentary policymaker also broached the persistence of special schools to remain on the fore, notwithstanding the pleas for the opposite. As he states:

I hoped that some of the special schools would close, but not only haven't they closed, they don't have the slightest prospect to close...they have plans. A special school building in... has collapsed and they have built a brand-new building, I don't know if they have already moved there....

On the other hand, one other prominent incumbent within the government explicitly declared his preference for special school settings as “the best arrangement” for disabled children and enfranchises the right for inclusion only to children with physical impairments who “apart from this, are ordinary persons”. The following quotation is subjected to scrutiny and critique not only because the respondent poignantly nominates special schools as probably one of “the best possible arrangements”, contrary to the tenets of inclusion, but also because he uses categorization, and the discourse of power inherent in it, to debar certain children, with other than physical impairments, from mainstream settings.

For me, personally this term [inclusion] means that we should find the best possible arrangement for each person separately. If there is a person whose needs and problems can be served better by remaining entirely in a special school, this would have been the best possible arrangement. If for somebody else, however, who for example has only physical disabilities, and except from this is an ordinary person, it would have been unfair for this person not to have access to an ordinary school.

As matters currently stand, the vision is the “normalisation” of the “abnormal” through their placement in specialised settings. The prevalent assumption is as Morton and Gibson (2003;13) write that the “goal of the individual is to be fixed”.

The rigidity of the education system and the negative impact of the “identity politics” are not conducive to the introduction of novel ideas in teaching methods and the creation of better learning environments. For instance, a special needs inspector,

indicated, co-teaching is an unknown phenomenon in Cyprus, not only, however, due to the rigid education system, but also due to the “rigid” mentality of ordinary teachers, who cannot easily accept the presence of another teacher. The prevalent phenomenon of “professional monologue” in schools, is extensively discussed by Ware (1994;344) who contends that once “ professionals remain structurally isolated in their classrooms and culturally isolated by long established professional behaviours and beliefs...attempts to promote collaboration can only lead to frustration and failure”. Indeed, despite the widespread resistance to collaboration, co-teaching has the potential to bring better academic outcomes whilst simultaneously, can replace the offensive, yet well entrenched, special/ordinary binaries attributed both to teachers and children.

Evidently, special education thinking and the deep structures that surround it still loom over the attempts for the realisation of an inclusive discourse. Understandably inclusive policies cannot be examined in isolation from the profusion of exclusionary practices. This is indeed a prodigious and thorny endeavour and requires an unambiguous and abiding commitment to the realisation of an inclusive discourse. The identification and removal of special education thinking should be at the core of the struggles for inclusion. Otherwise,

....if the deep structures of special education-those issues that underlie relations of power, control, dominance and subordination-are not identified and transformed, exclusion and marginalization will be reproduced even under the most well intentioned and most well supported programmes (McDonnell 2003;267).

The line that separates ideological and institutional conditions is extremely thin and almost indiscernible. Their relation is dynamic and reciprocal within an inter-play of power, dominance and vested interests. For instance, the market driven ideology of efficiency and effectiveness cannot be examined in isolation from the infrastructural bases within which it gets reified.

A characteristic of the Cyprus educational system that adversely affects inclusive educational policies is its competitive nature. Society incessantly seeks “efficiency” something that renders schools immensely competitive. Schools, as one parliamentary member points out, have long ceased to function as “communities” as they used to do.

Inclusive education presupposes that schools should work for the common good under conditions of collegiality something that is sacrificed in the name of the effectiveness movement. As the following quotation by an incumbent at the Ministry of Education suggests:

The goal of the education system is to achieve results and the results can be judged by the examinations for the introduction in the universities...The effectiveness pursued requires a heavy curriculum and hard work. This means that the promotion of disabled children through mixed ability classes creates problems on the work of the teachers. There is, therefore, an antinomy in pursuing both of them...

It is interesting, however, to note that in Cyprus the marketization of education is not evinced in the publication of league tables and the competition between schools to recruit resourceful individuals. This is because Cyprus has a centralised education system and schools are funded directly by the government irrespective of good or bad results. The marketization of education can be traced on the personal level in the sense that individual teachers might not desire special needs children in their classroom in case that this will adversely affect their assessment by inspectors something that in turn, can potentially mar their prospects for a future promotion.

One governmental respondent advocated an overall overhaul and restructuring of the education system. As matters currently stand it is impossible to achieve inclusion. As he poignantly puts it:

I think that the system should be radically metamorphosed in terms of policy, legislation and education of teachers, headmasters. There should be an in depth restructuring if the system is going to work. It is also needed time for the cultivation of this idea. [inclusion]...Firstly under the present circumstances it is necessary that legislation is implemented. Then, there should be some changes to the syllabi so as to enable all students to have equal opportunities...When the state has the willingness we might be able to achieve inclusion....

Some respondents talked about the need to re-evaluate the priorities of the education system and overcome the impediments that “disjointed incrementalism” (Loxley and Thomas 1999) resulting in the inconsistencies between policies. For instance, a re-evaluation of the existing values that inform our education system can make everyone

realise the long-term benefits of a society, when a harmonious symbiosis between disabled and not disabled people is achieved. As one respondent maintained:

[inclusion] would be a profit, not only for disabled but for all children, who learn to live together....to reach a stage when it is not going to be simple tolerance but fully acceptance. This will be a greater profit for a society than to achieve the ninety per cent of effectiveness rather than the eighty per cent. This message, however, should pass to the teachers. If it does not, it would not be effective...

The realisation of a better and more inclusive future is interlinked with the ways that key policy actors conceptualise and envision this future. Change cannot be achieved unless there is the vision and the directions that this can be materialised. Shapiro (1989;36) whilst writing about educational change gives considerable prominence to: “the critical necessity of a clearly enunciated moral vision to an effective politics of educational change.” It is necessary, however, that this vision should jointly permeate the “context of influence”, the “context of policy text production” and the “context of practice” (Ball and Bowe 1992). Arguably key policymakers’ moral vision is a crucial constituent element of “resistance” (Kendall and Wickham 1999;51) and the “strategy of struggle” (Foucault cited in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982;225) against the status quo of special education thinking. “Resistance”, can indeed be a “source of celebration” (Kendall and Wickham 1999;51) only when there is a clear and consistent moral vision on behalf of the government to put the “strategy of struggle” for the realisation of an inclusive discourse at the top priority of the state’s political agenda.

8.11 Conclusion

Key policymakers’ narratives make transparent the political, contentious and intricately interwoven nature of special educational policymaking. Educational policy analysis aims to unveil the structural and ideological mechanisms that act both synchronically and diachronically and construe the prevalent discursive orthodoxies that suffuse special educational policymaking. The incessant “agonism” of unequal power relations undergirding the policymaking process, is not only variegated and interlocking in nature, but it is also occasionally oblique and obscured, something that

renders the unveiling process a multidimensional, painstaking and in some respects, an elusive endeavour.

The “incessant agonism” of special educational policymaking thus takes place within an interactive network constituted by an array of political, social, historical and economic factors that construe the discursive contours within which policy constitution and dissemination takes place. Key policy actors’ will to truth is infiltrated, contested and occasionally “deflected” by a conglomerate of international or indigenous discursive impositions. By no means are the legislative documents a matter of serendipity. Rather they are the result of a prodigious and difficult to depict, “agonism” between adversary and contradictory forces emanating from different “centres” of power within a particular socio-political and historical context.

Key policymakers’ narratives brought to the surface the idiomorphic “discursive agonism” that permeates the attempts for more inclusive educational policy within the Cyprus context. The hybrid nature of special educational documents reflects and at the same time, is the result of the nebulous and muddled “discursive reality” that has been consolidated by an array of ideological and structural dynamics, which are either directly or indirectly related to special education.

It is evident that even though key policymakers may envision the demolition of the status quo of special education thinking and the creation of alternative futures, they often articulate a muddled and blurred discursive reality that mirrors and simultaneously is the result of the contradictory legislation, which on the one hand exhales a language of inclusion and on the other is fraught with exclusionary perspectives and attitudes that have been consolidated through the years.

The realisation of an inclusive discourse is a prodigious and a painstaking process that necessitates the existence of a clear and unambiguous vision that will concentrate on the identification and effacement of the variegated hurdles that impinge on the radical restructuring of the educational system. By no means is it overstated to argue that inclusion is primarily a matter of vision, not in the sense, however, of a utopian vision, as many anti-inclusionists might argue, but in the sense that it primarily needs to be accurately envisioned and pursued. Evidently, as matters stand, neither

economics nor technicalities are to be primarily and merely blamed for the failure to establish more inclusive policy and practice.

Bearing in mind the intricately interwoven nature of the issues at hand, it is not expected that reversibility prospects are an easy task to achieve. Foucault (1978) and his engagement with progressive politics, offers an insight into “ the possibilities of transformation and the play of dependencies between these transformations...” In this sense educational change is not perceived as a “uniform abstraction” (Foucault 1978;24) that can be easily achieved through facile political rhetoric and mono-dimensional considerations. At the same time, however, this proposition makes transparent that change is not necessary to be a revolution or a one-off attempt in order to be significant and substantial. Every little attempt matters and contributes to the gradual construction of alternative regimes of truth that will contribute to the creation of more inclusive educational policies and practices within the Cyprus context and elsewhere.

In this study some of the ways that economic considerations had, in certain cases, a significant impact on the ways that special educational policies were conceived and realised have been highlighted. Simultaneously, however, the process made transparent the ways that economic considerations are intermingled, corroborated or obliterated by a string of historical, political and social dynamics. Having said this, the significance of economic considerations and their effect on the constitution of “today’s discourse” in special educational policymaking, is significantly attenuated.

Some of the micro-technologies of power that constitute great and subverting impediments to the realisation of an inclusive discourse, were traced to the turbulent and dismal historical past, as well as to the current precarious political stability of the island. The political and historical conjunctures fuelled fear, prejudice, insecurity, individualistic and competitive feelings, something that, albeit indirectly, had and continue to have a prodigious impact on the ways that special educational policy is conceived and realised.

CHAPTER NINE

Epilogue

Whilst trying to conjure up the essence of my research endeavour, it emerges that I have tried to invoke macro and micro “emancipatory ruptures” to the flow of some of the cherished discursive orthodoxies involved in the special education policymaking process. The intention of this research has been to provide a confluence of theoretical and methodological standpoints, capable of identifying and challenging the binary oppositions that traditionally have held sway over the fields of special education and educational policy, respectively.

The thesis has been concerned with providing an alternative way of conceiving and understanding special education policymaking within the context of Cyprus. This has involved challenging individualistic and deficit views of disabled children, identifying and exploring the interplay of power relations, the role of key social actors in the policy process coupled with the interplay of biographical, political, ideological, social and cultural factors that constitute barriers to change.

This has required the employment of a multi-dimensional and critical framework of social analysis. The difficulty has been in achieving openness with regard to the convergence and divergence of the perspective deployed in this approach. Attention has focused on identifying and exploring the dominant frame of reference within which the various discourses that inform policymaking are formed and realised. Moreover, this has involved raising questions and providing a critical analysis of the assumptions, ideas and related practices within the field.

Given the complexity of issues involved and the challenges that the research has presented, this thesis is a very much an unfinished business and thus offers a partial and incomplete account. It has been, nevertheless, a very significant learning experience with regard to my own understanding and development particularly relating to grappling with the ideas involved in the engagement of multiple perspectives.

On reflection several limitations of the research need to be acknowledged. The difficulty of exploring the position of key actors in the policy development process without giving grounds for legitimising a top down approach to policy development, has been an issue that at times remains questionable. Given the complex nature of educational policymaking, the issue of absent voices is evident. Indeed the study raises the question of absent voices of participants from different levels of the system but whose involvement in policy must not be underestimated. This will include head-teachers, teachers and pupils. Another issue has been the question of achieving acceptable levels of anonymity with regard to respondents' identity. Every effort has been made to achieve this.

A further difficulty of the analysis concerns the extent to which the adopted framework has been able to provide substantive political insights into the process involved including strategies for change and various forms of resistance. The unresolved "Cyprus problem" raises serious issues regarding the difficulties that the term inclusion confers within a segregated two-ethnic nation state. The abolishment of the dead line in the island and the pursuant free movement of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, have merely facilitated the locational co-existence of the two communities. This is, however, something that might cultivate a detrimental complacency, in the sense that it might undermine the necessity to raise questions regarding the ways that it will be possible to bridge the gap that has traditionally diversified and segregated the two populations. Even the proposed scenarios for a viable solution of the Cyprus problem, fail to envision and convey anything beyond a superficial and by implication, a fragmentary symbiotic relationship between the two communities. For instance the existence of two educational systems, in case of a solution, condemns, a priori, inclusive education as a means to bring closer the two communities. Indeed, these concerns raise serious questions on the necessity to further explore the complicated issues involved and the consequences anticipated in terms of attempts to achieve greater inclusive policy and practice in the island.

Arguably, greater inclusive education policy cannot be achieved through binary educational policymaking trajectories referring to different categories of children and thereby, reinforcing certain special education features. Educational policymaking

bipolarisation undermines, to a considerable extent, the essence of inclusive policy and its concerns for effective education and education for all. Given the current state of affairs, it is really questionable how inclusive policies can be developed in Cyprus when concomitant consideration is not given to the parallel and aligned development of educational policies in general, something that significantly increases the complexity of the issues under investigation. The question of educational policymaking generally needs much fuller investigation.

Not only do the voices of key policymakers make transparent the discursive constitution of the struggles over inclusion but also they indicate the extent to which there is the political will needed for effective change. Key policymakers' discursive realities are institutionally sanctioned and therefore, they bear a crucial impact on special educational policymaking.

The heteroglossic and nebulous discursive reality underpinning special educational policymaking needs to be critically examined and challenged within the interplay of agency and structure in the attempts for transformative change. By no means can the institutionalised "regimes of truth" that subvert and jeopardize the attempts towards inclusion be expunged, unless there is the political will needed towards this direction. Otherwise, these "regimes of truth" will be further consolidated and naturalised thereby corroborating and perpetuating the historical imperatives of special education thinking. Understandably, the role of key policymakers, as agents of change, is crucial in attempting to challenge the status quo and dismantle the variegated discursive impediments towards effective change.

Change, according to progressive politics, comes through the accumulation of a profusion of macro and micro discursive "ruptures". Hence, even the tiniest and inconsequential locus of resistance in all arenas of educational policymaking, bears its own significance and contribution to the gradual challenge of the status quo. The quest for the realisation of a more inclusive practice should be regarded as an infinitive process, as an incessant struggle against a profusion of entangled forces.

Crucially, it is also imperative that "emancipatory ruptures" should be oriented to the language we use and the metaphors we deploy to describe disabled people, their

education and their life. The power of language and its multifarious configurations, constitute an immense, albeit an opaque, discursive impediment that unless deconstructed, it will continue to undermine and subvert any attempts towards inclusion. Even the linguistic predilections of single words are purveyors of the subjugating effect of discourse. The current position of special education cannot be questioned unless the language supporting this reality is fundamentally challenged. Insofar as the language of special needs remains unchallenged, little can be done in terms of developing transformative change.

Struggles over greater inclusion are ongoing, and it remains to be seen whether inclusion will be tackled as a matter of political urgency and priority within the Cyprus context. Moving rapidly towards the hard to gain newly acquired European identity, it will be necessary to question our policies and practices, not only in terms of inclusion but also in terms of its constituent issues such as human rights, citizenship education, social justice and equality of opportunity. The notion of inclusion is an all-encompassing term that necessitates the interrogation of a constellation of conceptual and pragmatic dynamics that constitute its essentially elusive nature. The debate is ongoing and will presumably never end; the crucial point, therefore, is to be willing and well aware of the necessity to be constantly and seriously engaged in this critical process. The struggles towards the realisation of more inclusive policies and practices must assume neither complacency (Barton 2004) nor abdication. This thesis is a modest but serious attempt, to encourage this form of critical engagement.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS WITH POLICY ACTORS-INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

► SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH KEY POLICY ACTORS

ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗΣ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗΣ-ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΗ ΑΝΑΔΡΟΜΗ POLICY FORMULATION- A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT:

1) Ποιοι είναι οι κυριότεροι πρωταγωνιστές που επηρέασαν την ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική (special education policy) στην Κύπρο;

1) Who are the key actors that influenced special education policy in Cyprus?

2) Ποια ήταν η θέση τους; Ποιό ρόλο έπαιξε ο καθένας;

2) What was their position? What role did each one play?

3) Ποιοι ιδεολογικοί, πολιτικοί και οικονομικοί παράγοντες επηρέασαν/ επηρεάζουν την ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική;

3) What ideological, political and economic factors influenced/ influence special education policy?

4) Μπορείτε να μας αναφέρετε κάποιες κοινοβουλευτικές αποφάσεις που επηρέασαν σε μεγάλο βαθμό την πολιτική της ειδικής εκπαίδευσης;

4) Are you aware of any major parliamentary decisions that had a profound impact on special education policies?

5) Με ποιους τρόπους έχει η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση επηρεάσει την ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική στην Κύπρο;/Πώς νομίζετε θα την επηρεάσει στο μέλλον;

5) In what ways has the EU impacted on Cyprus special education policy/What do you think the future impact will be?

6) Ποιες αναφορές, ντοκουμέντα ή έγγραφα θα μας συστήνατε για να σχηματίσουμε μια πιο ξεκάθαρη εικόνα για την εξέλιξη της ειδικής εκπαιδευτικής πολιτικής στην Κύπρο;

6) What reports or documents would you recommend for getting a clearer picture of special education policy evolvement in Cyprus?

Η ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΣΗΜΕΡΑ THE CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT

1) Με ποιο τρόπο οι πρόσφατες κυβερνητικές και δικαστικές πολιτικές (αποφάσεις) έχουν επηρεάσει την ειδική εκπαίδευση;

1) In what ways have recent governmental and court policies affected special education?

2) Ποια πρόσωπα της πολιτείας νομίζετε έχουν την μεγαλύτερη επιρροή στις αποφάσεις για την ειδική εκπαίδευση;

2) Which persons at the state level do you think have the most influence over special education decisions?

3) Με ποιο τρόπο το κυπριακό σύνταγμα επηρεάζει την ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική;

3) In what ways does the Cyprus constitution influence special education policies?

4) Ποια είναι η σφαιρική σας εκτίμηση αναφορικά με τη σημερινή ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική. Πού ήμασταν, πού είμαστε (πολιτική ένταξης;) και πού πρέπει να πάμε

4) What is your overall evaluation concerning the current special education policy? Where have we been, where we are (inclusive policies?) and where should we go?

5) Με ποιους τρόπους ενισχύονται και επανεμφανίζονται τα αναχρονιστικά στοιχεία της ειδικής αγωγής στο εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα;

5) In what ways are the antiquated imperatives of special educations being bolstered and regenerated within the educational apparatus?

6) Με ποιους τρόπους, αν υπάρχουν, η εκπαιδευτική πολιτική αντιστρατεύεται την ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική; Ποιό το αντίκτυπο στην εφαρμογή της εκπαιδευτικής πολιτικής;

6) In what ways if any, are special and mainstream education policies contradictory? What are the implications for policy implementation?

7) Πώς θα χαρακτηρίζατε την πολιτική μη διακρίσης της Κύπρου σε σχέση με άλλες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες;

7) How would you characterize Cyprus' anti-discrimination legislation in comparison with other E.U countries?

8) Πιστεύετε ότι η Κύπρος πρέπει να εκμοντερνίσει και να επαναπροσαρμόσει τη νομοθεσία της για την πολιτική της μη διάκρισης σε σχέση με την ανικανότητα ή αναπηρία;

8) Do you think that Cyprus needs to modernize and re-adapt its disability anti-discrimination legislation?

9) Υπάρχουν για παράδειγμα τα αναλογικά συστήματα που ζητούν από τους οργανισμούς να συμπεριλάβουν στο εργατικό τους δυναμικό ένα συγκεκριμένο ποσοστό ατόμων με αναπηρίες, και σε περίπτωση που αυτό δεν τηρείται, υπάρχουν οποιεσδήποτε κυρώσεις;

9) Are there for example the quota systems that require organizations to include a certain percentage of disabled people within the workforce, and if they fail to do so, are there any fines imposed on them?

10) Σε ποιο βαθμό τα άτομα με αναπηρίες και οι οργανώσεις τους συμπεριλαμβάνονται στην δημιουργία της ειδικής εκπαιδευτικής πολιτικής;

10) To what extent are disabled people and their organizations included in the process of policy formulation?

Η ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΕΝΣΩΜΑΤΩΣΗΣ INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1) Πώς αντιλαμβάνεστε την «ένταξη»;

1) What do you understand by “inclusion”?

2) Σε ποιο βαθμό η εκπαιδευτική πρακτική αντικατοπτρίζει την πολιτική της ένταξης;

2) To what extent does educational practice reflect inclusive policies?

3) Ποια θεωρείτε ως τα σημαντικότερα ιδεολογικά και θεσμικά εμπόδια για την πολιτική και πρακτική της ένταξης;

3) What do you see as the major ideological and institutional impediments to inclusive policy and practice?

4) Με ποιους τρόπους η κυβέρνηση προωθεί την πολιτική της ένταξης;

4) In what ways does the government promote the realisation of an inclusive discourse?

5) Τι εισηγείστε ότι χρειάζεται για καλύτερη πρακτική ένταξης στα σχολεία;

5) What would you suggest is required for more inclusive practices within schools?

- 6) Ποιος είναι ο δρόμος για την πολιτική και πρακτική της ένταξης;
6) What is the way forward to inclusive education policy and practice?

ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΟΙ ΠΑΡΑΜΕΤΡΟΙ ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) Από πού δίνονται τα χρήματα για την υλοποίηση της πολιτικής της ένταξης;
1) Where does the money for inclusive education policy implementation come from?
- 2) Τι ποσοστό του κυβερνητικού εκπαιδευτικού προϋπολογισμού δίνεται στην ειδική εκπαίδευση; Έχει αυξηθεί το ποσό αυτό από τα προηγούμενα χρόνια;
2) What percentage of governmental education outlays are allocated to special education? Has the amount been increased during the last years?
- 3) Πού και πώς δίνονται αυτά τα χρήματα;
3) Where and how is the money allocated?
- 4) Ποιος αποφασίζει για το πώς θα ξοδευτούν τα χρήματα αυτά;
4) Who decides how it is spent?

ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1) Με ποιούς τρόπους αναμένετε ότι μια πιθανή λύση του Κυπριακού προβλήματος, πιθανότατα βασισμένη στο σχέδιο Ανάν, θα επηρεάσει την εκπαίδευση;
1) In what ways do you expect that a possible solution of the Cyprus problem, most probably based on the Anan plan, would affect education?
- 2) Νομίζετε ότι οι αλλαγές αυτές, αν τελικά υπάρξουν, θα έχουν οποιοδήποτε αντίκτυπο στην ειδική εκπαιδευτική πολιτική;
2) Do you think that these changes, if any, would have a direct or indirect impact on special education policy?
- 3) Αναμένεται ότι το αναγνωρισμένο κράτος της Κύπρου θα πρέπει να ενσωματώσει τους πολίτες την τουρκοκυπριακής μειοψηφίας της βόρειας Κύπρου. Με ποιούς τρόπους νομίζετε ότι η κυβέρνηση και το εκπαιδευτικό σύστημα θα ανταποκριθεί σε αυτές τις προκλήσεις;

3) It is expected that the recognised state of Cyprus will have to include the citizens of the Turkish Cypriot ethnic minority of north Cyprus. In what ways do you expect that the government and the education system will respond to these challenges?

4) Ποια είναι η γνώμη σας αναφορικά με τον ισχύοντα νόμο για την ειδική αγωγή (113(I) 1999);

4) What is your opinion regarding the current special education legislative document (113(I) 1999)?

5) Μπορείτε να διακρίνετε οποιεσδήποτε ασάφειες και αντιφάσεις οι οποίες αντίκεινται στις εισαγωγικές προκηρύξεις του νόμου σχετικά με την πραγματοποίηση της πολιτικής της ενσωμάτωσης όπως αυτή βασίζεται στις αρχές των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων;

5) Can you identify any inconsistencies and contradictions that work against the preliminary rhetorical proclamations of the document, concerning the realisation of an inclusive discourse based on the notion of entitlement?

6) Πιστεύετε ότι ο ισχύοντας νόμος, άμεσα ή έμμεσα, αποδυναμώνει τα άτομα με ειδικές ανάγκες;

6) Do you think that the current legislative document, explicitly or implicitly disempowers disabled people and their advocates?

7) Νομίζετε ότι μια διαφορετική νομοθεσία, με μεγαλύτερη έμφαση στην πολιτική της ενσωμάτωσης, θα έκανε οποιαδήποτε θετική διαφορά στην πολιτική εφαρμογής του νόμου;

7) Do you think that an alternative legislative document, more explicitly committed to the realisation of an inclusive discourse, would make any positive difference to the implementation process?

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